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BENNETT'S
M E M O I R S
AND
P O E T R Y.

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AN
Bennett
Bennett

HIS MEMOIRS

AND

POETRY,

BY

CHARLES FREDERICK BENNETT,

SECOND SON

OF THE LATE

REV. THOMAS BENNETT, D. D.

FORMERLY OF TRINITY-COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

**AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE PEACE
FOR THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.**

*“Quem admodum gubernatores optimi vim tempestatis, sic sapientes
fortunæ impetum, superare non possunt.*

*“Man, considered in himself, is a very helpless and a very wretched
being. He is subject every moment to the greatest calamities and
misfortunes. He is beset with dangers on all sides, and may be-
come unhappy by numberless casualties, which he could not fore-
see, nor have prevented had he foreseen them.”* ADDISON.

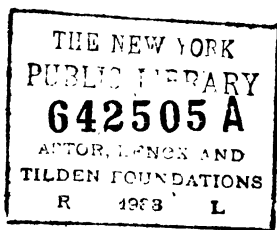
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1817.

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DEDICATION.

To MRS. C. F. BENNETT.

“ It is a kind of compliment paid to panegyric itself, to use it on so just an occasion.” YOUNG.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

THOUGH I follow the example of the brilliant Sheridan in a domestic dedication, I am not vain enough to expect, that I can overtake his surpassing genius. A husband's compliment will administer a pleasure, to which your conscientious virtue will subscribe not the least share: for this, I lose no time in leaving my volume, where it may soonest court your inspection. I leave it, therefore, not on your toilet, not on

your piano-forte—no, nor your shelf of novels : I repose it in your nursery, that scene, which may challenge competition for its infantine health, education, and cleanliness, and render each cheerful countenance “ a refreshment to man.”

Prominent occurrences, connected with a profession not unanimously respected, have engaged my hesitation in committing them to the press ; and though some friend may observe, that I ought to have hesitated longer, yet I cannot so soon, without conscious injustice, wholly despise the stage, having the public marks of affectionate regard yet present to my memory, which were bestowed on the farewell of that amiable son, husband, and father, John Bannister. The honours, which have so recently borne testimony to a literary consequence as well as social value in a Kemble, I feel a national impulse to mention. Applause, that yet resounds in my ears, and which must accompany her proud reflection to retirement, was not the giddy tumult of a mob, thoughtless in its choice and inconstant in its idolatry, but the meed of female excellence, the

undecided arbitration of an heroic struggle for transcendency betwixt feminine dignity and moral elegance ; and yet, notwithstanding it was the wreath of poetic triumph, the glory of the English language, the guerdon of chastised and animated eloquence, a certain classic superiority, which, having only imagined on admiring the sculpture of antiquity, we are now at heart convinced of, in our tearful remembrance of Mrs. Siddons. An Apollo Belvidere, a Venus de Medici, the text of Grecian or of Roman fame, the heroism of a Portia, Lucretia and Penelope, a Plato and a Sophocles, are familiar with the learned : but the influence of an actor, whose private and professional merits hang poized in equilibrium, is general ; and, from our one-shilling gallery to our court, have we traced their approbation. I mention the metropolitan, because more palpable than the provincial example ; yet journals of recent date present us from a company, the fifty years' certificate of the undeviating moral rectitude, whilst deeply lamenting to record the sudden, and therefore more melancholy death, of the admired tragedian. York may still boast a strug-

ture of inanimate stone, but the architecture of an exemplary and social good lies wrecked in venerable ruin upon the bier of Cummins.

You know my sentiments upon the question of the stage's utility and moral tendency, as well as rank to be allowed the professor ; and will see, that I have fearlessly given them in brief, under the satisfaction of an approving conscience. Although the edge of captivation with myself is so far blunted, that I seldom enter the doors of a theatre ; although, like every other institution, its rational symmetry is defective : I felt confident, that much good might be effected through the *virtuous, uncorrupt, and legitimate* drama. I remember, that one of the first impressions I received of feminine sweetness and amiable forbearance, of conjugal duty, and inimitable delicacy, was not during my service in the King's Bench practice, where the indignant rebuke of its most valuable president, Lord Kenyon, was insufficient to stop the poisonous tide of actions for breaches of connubial bliss : it was in the play-house, during the representation of one of those

old dramas too, whose exceptional passages, I am sorry to admit, do not keep the elevation of its innocent wit and point. It was in the *Careless Husband* of Colley Cibber: and I cannot resist the relation of a case, which your own domestic worth brings fresh to recollection. Lady Easy, on being asked by her wild and fashionable husband, what sort of company would most please her, replies—"When business would permit it, yours; and in your absence a sincere friend, who were truly happy in an honest husband, to sit a cheerful hour, and talk in mutual praise of our condition." I looked round the tiers of elegant female effulgence and saw some admiration, though I confess not the approving smiles, which some time after beamed on Lady Modish, who observes, that "an homely woman at the head of a fashion would not be allowed in it by the men, and consequently not followed by the women;" and that she "cannot see a woman of spirit has any business in this world but to dress, and make the men like her." If Lady Modish, her disregard of matrimonial obligations and blandishments, were

exposures of more than mere fashionable levity, when she informed her friend that she " could no
 " more choose a man by the eye, than a shoe :
 " one must draw 'em on a little to see if they are
 " right to one's foot :"—what irresistible benignity and modest sovereignty, in contrast, did Lady Easy display at the discovery of her husband, returned from his midnight aberrations, fallen asleep in an easy chair, aside her maid asleep in another. Lady Easy's conduct and reasoning to many, I am not to be told, would render her truly ridiculous ; but no separation ensued, and, eventually, her angel-patience triumphed, as it deserved, over the guilty insensibility of an ungrateful husband, as it did over the distress I suffered, for the wrongs of such a wife. She starts and exclaims—

" Ha !

" Protect me virtue, patience, reason !

" Teach me to bear this killing sight, or let

" Me think my dreaming senses are deceived !

" For sure a sight like this might raise the arm

" Of duty, ev'n to the breast of love ! At least

" I'll throw this vizard of my patience off :

" Now wake him in his guilt,

" And bare-faced front him with my wrongs.

" I'll talk to him till he blushes, nay till he—
 " Frowns on me, perhaps—and then
 " I'm lost again. The ease of a few tears
 " Is all that's left me—
 " And duty too forbids me to insult,
 " When I have vow'd obedience. Perhaps
 " The fault's in me, and nature has not form'd
 " Me with the thousand little requisites
 " That warm the heart to love.
 " Some where there is a fault,
 " But heav'n best knows what both of us deserve.
 " Ha! Bare-headed,* and in so sound a sleep!
 " Who knows, while thus exposed to th'anawhole-
 some air,
 " But heav'n offended may o'ertake his crime,
 " And, in some languishing distemper, leave him
 " A severe example of its violated laws?
 " Forbid it mercy, and forbid it love.
 " This may prevent it. [*Takes a vesture from her*
 " *neck, and lays it gently on his head.*] And if he should
 " wake offended at my too busy care, let my heart-breaking
 " patience, duty, and my fond affection, plead my pardon."

Sir Charles Easy wakes to the keen appeal
 of real gallantry, afterwards owns his despicable
 cruelty, and amongst other visitations of peni-
 tence, cries " I blush to think I've worn so bright
 " a jewel in my bosom, and till this hour have

* In Cibber's time " Beaux wore perriwigs and ladies their
 own hair."

“ scarce been curious once to look upon its lustre.”

Whilst you yourself are instructing our children in the art of reading, I cannot, as yet, think I am preparing for their riper and reflecting years an instrument (should this volume fall into their hands) to alarm their pride, a perusal of a father's degradation, a document in which, at worst, they can lament any errors greater in their parent than the investigators of human incorrectness will, I hope, forgive.

I will no longer divert your favourite duties or trespass on the character of a dedication, that you may more quickly instil into the infant mind, those seeds of moral and religious principle, with which you are so intimate, which will best secure the welfare of your tender charge, and than which no prospect is more anxiously prayed for by

Your affectionate,

C. F. BENNETT.

Holt, Norfolk, July 1, 1817.

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GENEROUS READER,

I BELIEVE that the rhetorical figure of the distressed mariner, however trite, has seldom been adopted more aptly to pourtray the symbol of misfortune, than in the case of that humble individual who now, for the first time, unlocks his breast to the sympathy of the philanthropist, though hazarding additional wounds from the thrusts of malice, the perversion of criticism—nay, possibly, from treacherous friendship. Conceive then a poor, frail, and shattered bark, labouring under a tyrannic hurricane, whilst overwhelming clouds awhile exclude every star that

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would lend a beam of hope—the weather-beaten and almost exhausted pilot struggling for the lives of others at the imminent risk of his own: see the vessel overcharged, and asking relief from its human freight. The captain disdains the selfish thought of saving himself alone, and, looking back one moment to the records of providence, feels at length inspired with resolution to anchor in the bay of Christian faith.

“ *Teneras defendo à frigore myrtos.*”*

The immortal poet, Homer, we are told, was honoured by the contention of seven principal Grecian cities for the place of his birth: in the year 1775, and in the adjoining mansion to that of the celebrated Wilks, report says, that the first breath of an humbler poet was imparted by that Being, whose protection of my tender infancy, of my dangerous youth, and my reflecting manhood, as it makes the first claim to an exertion in his praise, affords too much pleasure to leave it for my last of payments. Possibly the propinquity of Prince's Court to St. James's Park, and my declamatory neighbour, gave the earliest impulse to sentiments, mingling equal approbation

* I protect the tender myrtles from the cold.

of such loyalty and liberty—such reverence of the noble and pride of the commoner—as I have ever since hailed for the wisest support of which a political constitution is susceptible. Alike the adversary of tyrannic sway and rebellious pretensions to illicit liberty, my one glance at the earth at large proclaims me the happy subject of the happiest state. The champion who can bravely grasp those rights which a sordid and traitorous minister would wrench from the weak, and the patriot minister who, with no less courage and unawed by popular phrenzy, shrinks not from the helm his skill and honour guide, are characters which this country's history has known, and with myself most gratefully acknowledge. Who vies with me in birth? I am a Briton.

An hereditary disposition in myself to marry at the instigation of affection only, may be observed in my father's resignation of his fellowship from Trinity-college, Cambridge, when he preferred the hand of a lady of Cambridge at the altar of St. Bride, Fleet-street, London. Her name was Mary Large; and though, since that period, death has left but a melancholy remnant of the circle who witnessed the lover's ardour in all the triumph of youth, some remain to prove how little he was biassed by worldly caution; for that du-

ring his courtship, the Market-hill lying in his path, his college-cotemporaries from the Rose-Inn window would cry, "Largo, largo"—the term in music well known to signify—slowly, slowly. The second son of this union—an union, if not of prudence, certainly of love—now stands before you, the register of St. Margaret's, Westminster, assigning him the Christian appellation of Charles Frederick. There also survive their much-lamented parents my elder and younger brother. The first, possessing from a boy advantages of fortune much superior to mine—talents which he has improved more to his own commendation than my envy; and not more to my credit, being his brother, than my self-gratulation. He knows (or, at least, I should think that past circumstances would give him to know) I cannot flatter. Certain differences of opinion have arisen between us, as most people's differences, either from not knowing each other better, or from the interfering artifice of third persons. Long may he enjoy the pleasures that surround him, uninterrupted with cares like mine! Long may he live in the sun-beams of his family-smiles, unclouded by conceptions disparaging to his brother! Long may he continue an ornament to the church, but never may the pardonable prejudices of early life sink into the confirmed bigotry of experienced old

age ! Among the number of his virtues, it is but gratitude to confess some acts of kindness I have experienced at his hands ; and among the list of human failings, the error of judgment, that springs from insufficient enquiry, is seldom the least. My younger brother, from some defect of right reason, has hitherto been unable to retain any occupation, becoming (until very lately) the mournful *protégé* of certainly the not very opulent hero of these memoirs.

Previous to my arrival at that stage of male dignity, when the bright eye of childhood assumes a more animated lustre from the splendid honour, which destines him a first pair of breeches (and, by the by, if dress is not the toy of maturity, some equally frivolous and empty bauble not unfrequently usurps our attention), my recollection carries me back to the preparatory school of old Mrs. Knight, in Barton-street, Westminster, the terror of whose birch, and a pair of stocks to turn our toes out, is to be recorded as my first intimation of human care : and yet what a pastime should I now enjoy from a few minutes conversation with my old alarmist. But, ah ! the claim of nature denies it. So fleeting are the objects of this engaging world, that did I enquire in Barton-street who recollected my ancient moni-

dress, the reply would, in all likelihood be—none. The august and the vulgar—the terrible and the terrified—the palace and the pig-sty—the sculptured dome and the turf-clad hovel—the important and contemptible—the wise and the insignificant—Tyre—Sydon—Carthage—Athens—the legions of Scipio, Hannibal, and Cæsar—a Pompey or a Cato—a Bentley—a Porson—a Busby—Vincent—or a Mrs. Knight, birch, stocks and all—vanished in the twinkling of an eye, one heap of indistinguishable lumber, whilst

“ Vassal and lord lie side by side grossly familiar :”

Nay, such is the transition of mortal affairs, that passing through a country town, the other day, where twelve years since I was acquainted with at least seventy-two persons, I found but seven of the same. Some, I was told, were married and gone—some bankrupts and gone ; —but most, alas ! dead and gone.

I was never introduced to the dancing-master, and all personal graces were consummated in the elegant turn of my feet from the inflexible stocks of my inexorable Mistress Knight. On the knee of my father, whose delight now seemed the proficiency of his two children's education, I first

caught my initiation to the Latin accidence ; and as I increased in size, so did my dawning comprehension of the elements of grammar—which my father would humourously dub the grey mare : an allusion I have since supposed in compliment to the old saying—“ the grey mare is the better horse ;” and that so grammar would be the best rocking-horse or mare, for his children in their journey to Parnassus. A halfpenny sometimes rewarded my attention, and my proficiency (though slow) would sometimes reward my Mentor’s care. After an interval of some few months bestowed upon a writing and ciphering school in Charles-street, Westminster, with a name-sake, my attention was occupied with Latin and Greek : in the which course I will confess, that my imagination was not absolutely charmed, and I was frequently and but too justly reprimanded for my dullness. Here I cannot forbear a remark, for which my sole design in making is the public good ; and should the affection and gratitude of a son, for his parent’s solicitude in his tuition, step too far aside, and sacrifice too freely at the altar of impartial justice (or say impartial opinion), I shall venerate the critic-priest who may chastise my rites, daring not again to profane with them the temple of piety. My reflexion favours the study of the mind’s temper and capacity, as the first step

towards its culture. I fear my obtuse faculties and acute feelings were often in collision; and that what severe rebukes the former provoked, were too sensitively felt by the latter. A shame, or a foolish pride, or something else—be it what it might—at this fearful juncture, augmented my stupor to that degree, that the letters in my books danced like the ignis-fatuus, and a chaotic confusion of intellect alone followed during the remainder of that lesson. How many times since have I thought, that notwithstanding the large sum of patience I had so extravagantly drawn upon the indulgence of my anxious instructor, one more little bill at a short date would have retrieved my fortunes by his desired approval. In the direction of those youth, whose parents have since honoured me with their care, I have been no stranger to the irksome tedium that has presented itself, when, keenly alive to your reputation and interests, the dullness or inattention of some trifler would rouse up every reproachful nerve and phrase, to resent the disappointment of your ardent yet procrastinated hopes. Yes—I have too vexatiously and too often suffered all the conflict between anger and philosophy—too regretfully witnessed temper well-nigh driven from the fortress of the heart, the arm half-lifted as its ally—and my spirits too nearly exhausted in their rally round the standard

of prudence and reason. In such encounters memory conjured up scholastic scenes of earlier date, my father and my dullness arraigned my authority, I extended an extra portion of forbearance, and not seldom won the glorious cause. I say glorious, for surely no cause can be more glorious than a patient conquest of unheedful or sluggard application in the rising youth. Money and thanks may pay the upright master in part; but it is the crest of virtues and attainments his pupil bears aloft into society, which is his pure, his fullest, and most endearing recompence.

About this period, I was often pleased in my rambles about Westminster-hall to squeeze myself into the courts of justice, listening to the wit and eloquence of the bar, though imperfectly comprehending what I heard. The style and rant of some long-winded orators made powerful impressions on my memory; and at home my father would often detect my endeavours to be the earnest pleader, behind a chair placed so as to be a substitute for the bar. In so doing, being about nine or ten years of age, and knowing what I said was but counterfeit sense, I was ashamed at discovery; but found at length I was much encouraged by my father, who felt pleased

at this early effort, containing something ingenious.

The relief of guard at St. James's Palace was a fine sight, and captivated a great portion of my admiration; but nothing to the same degree, which any profession that dealt in animation of the oral faculties would never fail to inspire. My father having been bred up at Westminster school, and my brother now placed there, the Latin plays of Terence, annually performed in the dormitory, I was usually admitted to see. Though I could not wholly understand the passages most applauded, my fancy was wonderfully delighted; but still more at the representation of some English plays by other Westminster scholars, during the Christmas recess, at a dancing-room in Barton-street. The spangled-shape dresses, the nodding plume, the admiring and applauding audience, composed chiefly of females and of the first rank, certainly dazzled my mind, and I felt all the tragic pathos glow in my boyish blood. It

“Grew with my growth and strengthen'd with my strength;”

and my legs for the first time began to emulate all the elegance of the histrionic strut. At home

would I enact in abstract what I had seen and dreamed the night before, figuring before the parlour-glass, and with self-importance also wrapped up in the maid's apron, which I had previously slung at my back, by tying the strings round my neck. My recollection of the scenery and temporary seats erected at these plays engaged my leisure hours, whilst other boys enjoyed their tops, marbles, and cricket, in cutting down contributions from the fire-wood for my epitome of seats, stage, scene-frames, &c. ; and I also painted my rude type of the scenery—which altogether after some two or three years practice and improvements, had sufficient merit to be deemed meritoriously ingenious by my father and mother: and I was much, very much encouraged in my management of this minor theatre, which, more fortunate than certain other houses, had no rival to dispute the palm, and continued open all the year by the unlimited patent of the laundress, who allowed me a portion of her long ironing-board. But as theatric, like most other descriptions of ambition, is not content with minor success, I soon produced scenery on a larger scale of nine feet in height ; and at the age of thirteen had appropriated a room, seldom wanted in the family, to the purpose of my own and some few friends' performance. From seeing Mrs. Sid-

dens, Kemble, and other performers of note, I had been led to study several of their principal characters—my foremost of which was Zaphira in Barbarossa. Mrs. Siddons had rivetted my attention to her inimitable talents. In this and a future propensity to the drama, which when stripped of its licentiousness and sometimes doubtful moral tendency, high authorities have approved and I still admire, I can trace the dawn of a faithful disposition, a warmth and constancy, unwilling to forsake the object my partiality had once made my favourite. My fault I humbly trust, if any, was more a dull adherence to the same design, than my merit was the quick versatility of talents, embracing various pursuits, and daringly successful in them all.

I often recited passages from plays to my father, mother, and visitors, and saved up my pence to purchase Bell's Shakspear, then publishing in numbers; and I remember, among other visitors who commended my thirst for buying books was a Mr. Vaughan, a relation of the celebrated Horne Tooke, and who besides gave me all the silver in his purse upon one occasion. This gentleman, I believe, studied the law, and is now the celebrated sergeant.

My classical tuition proceeded under the Westminster regimen, and the private care of my father, until he chose to remove me to St. Paul's school. During the contemplation of this intended step, I learned from a companion, a Pauline, Michael Smith (the son of a clergyman in Westminster, and who now, I believe, holds a minor canonry in Rochester cathedral), that my examination under Dr. Roberts, the head master, would determine in how high a class I should be placed. Here then, for the first moment in my boyhood, scholastic pride and emulation kindled their embers in my breast—one proof, among several, of the ascendancy in a public over private tuition. Having surmounted the hard shell and husk, I found the pleasing flavour of the nut. I fagged my plodding genius in retirement; and though still an amateur of plays, I found they were no substitute for the lessons I had now to learn. Many of my playmates and brother actors were dispersed, or made the final exit; for even in youth death begins his warnings, and the expanding bud of May is often blasted by untimely frost. My walks to St. Paul's school from Westminster, and my return, together with my evening tasks, now wholly engrossed my time; and Shakspear yielded to Homer, in this instance at least. I now learned also, from old and young, that the

profession of the stage was at variance with the advice of most people—that I should never be esteemed a gentleman, if I went on the stage. I yielded to this severe and bitter denunciation, and discarded every shadow of such intentions from my thoughts. College and the church were the reigning topics in the circle I had entered, and I had seldom time or inclination to indulge in any other. It is true, that at our yearly speeches in the school, I shared the delight of all his auditory, when Elliston (who was the hero of this academic rostrum, and displayed very promising seeds of rhetorical talent) ascended to claim the greetings of enthusiastic applause; and particularly do I remember his early abilities, in a theme on the mutability of fortune, having this motto—

“ Trust not prosperity’s alluring wiles :

“ She seeks our ruin in her syren smiles.”

He was a youth, at the upper class shooting into manhood, of most agreeable manners; and is since become too well known as an actor, and I hope too well respected as a man, to need any further panegyric of mine. Fortune has very much favoured his pursuits, which is more than I can say of most others from our upper classes—our cotemporaries at St. Paul’s. A very few have

risen in church or college preferment; or in their other respective vocations, as I could have wished, as I should have expected, and as most of them, I am sure, deserved. However, when I reflect upon the gifts of fortune, I find, that her precarious boon is not worth anxiety : but a little longer and we quit our mortal habitation, of which daily and sudden dissolutions give repeated notice. Education and ingenuous merit, birth and friends, how often do they fail to promote our elevation in life, as we think we have a right to expect ! If my humble but sincere consolation be of any value to those old school-fellows, whom the grim tyrant, death, has yet spared, it will be a reference to the many wise expositions of human vanities and human hopes, which they have read in the venerable writers of antiquity both sacred and profane. With modest deference I would wish to advise, that should any of them struggle hard, with large families and scanty incomes, to maintain the gentleman's rank, that they still pursue the glorious path, and honourably continue to make a rational hope their polar star through this world, counting with cheerfulness of the next. The orphan and the widow will be heaven's care.

“ All heads must come

“ To the cold tomb :

"Only the actions of the just

"Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

About this period the grave, amongst its other victims, robbed me of a friend and companion in my mother. My eldest brother had been first in the college at Westminster, and now was elected to Cambridge; my younger brother was in the country at nurse; and the greater portion of my time having been under my father's private instructions, I was the domestic boy, and the chief companion of my mother at home and in her walks. Judge then, generous reader, what a lad of thirteen years of age must have felt in such a deprivation as this; and yet, how little a boy of that age could know the full amount of his loss, and its results! There had been other children by my mother, but heaven had kindly removed them, never to know a mother's value and her absence. No tear will restore her, and it is my duty to submit to the chastisements of providence: but who can record the commencement of life's misfortunes without unutterable anguish? You, who, perhaps from youth, may have rolled in luxurious splendour through routines of fashion and gaiety—you who could never know a tithe of my loss—may deem my grief effeminate; and the cold moralist may tell me, that the school

of affliction is the entrance to self-knowledge;
yet

“ Nature her custom holds,
“ Let shame say what it will.”

I had the melancholy satisfaction of attending my mother's funeral in the cloisters of that abbey, where repose huge heaps of royal and other noble dust, and where monumental eulogy (one would think) was exhausted.

“ Here the proud prince, and favourite yet prouder;
“ His sov'reign's keeper and the people's scourge,
“ Are huddled out of sight. Here lie abash'd
“ The great negociators of the earth,
“ And celebrated masters of the balance,
“ Deep read in stratagems and wiles of courts.
“ How vain their treaty-skill !”

For reasons known best to my father, I was removed to the Temple; and soon afterwards articulated to Mr. T. White—

“ Deep on his front engraven, deliberation sat”—

of the King's Bench Office, and Deputy Custos Rotulorum of that venerable court. Dr. Roberts (who has lately retired from the fatigues of his

mastership, which pressed too heavy on his age) was ever very kind to me, and expressed no inconsiderable regret, that I should relinquish the advantages of college, and prior intentions of entering the church. It is but a just tribute, that I never found him the severe master I had previously been taught to expect; though, at the same time, ardently diligent in discharging the wearisome duties of his office. The reader must not expect me, in the fidelity of my memoirs, never to forget any of my faults; but I will assure him, that I had no greater at this age, than sometimes, on my return with others from St. Paul's down Fleet-street, to join in a conspiracy to throw a little gunpowder into the apple-women's paper lanterns—or, at an earlier period, when the days grew short, to string the knockers of North-street, Westminster, a boy holding each end of the apparatus till all were threaded; then, one giving way, the other would hastily draw the string, and raise about fourteen or fifteen knockers at the same moment. Nor, during my articles and continuance with Mr. White, does my conscience reproach me with any greater crime, than sometimes scaring his favourite Tom-cat, as he passed the office-door, which offence, I have no doubt, should poor Tom rise in judgment against me, on my sincere promise never to re-

peat, he will readily forgive ; but keeping terriers for the professed purpose of worrying old maid's cats to death, breaking lamps and windows, or other cruel and mischievous games practised among some of the Westminster boys, never came within the compass of my amusement.

During my continuance in the Temple, my attention was much arrested by the transcendent genius and skill of the eloquent Erskine. I never saw any man possess so much of the "*ars celandi artem*"—the art of concealing art—the first property in a public orator. Though I heard the majestic and elegant Pitt, and also his rival, Fox (in the latter of whom the brilliancy of Cicero and the argument of Demosthenes seemed to unite too rapidly for one mouth to utter), the bar seemed a profession I was emulous to arrive at. I suggested my ideas to my friends, who told me, that serving my articles to an attorney would be an advantage, and I should have less terms to keep previous to admission. The biography of Erskine charmed me, when I read the perseverance with which he surmounted all the thralldom of poverty. My whole soul glowed at every opportunity of hearing and reading his speeches : the beauteous colours of his picture, when portraying inno-

conce deserted or seduced ; the lightning of his reproofs, with which " he flashed conviction " on the adulterer ; his exposure of the broken-hearted pangs, which rent the bosom where late the darling daughter hung, and knew no higher bliss, but who was now left open only to the pity, that might regret the seducer's cruelty but could not restore its victim : in short, his illustrations of the moral and religious duties, united to the well-known benevolence of his own character—for

" Where the precept fail'd, th' example taught,"—

all spread their charms to lighten up my ambition. I had also for some time previously contracted a knack at rhyming ; and though some time mortified at not finding a clear rhyme to sugar, &c. I was not dismayed from a youthful smirking at the muses. The first lines I wrote were upon my native city of London, of which I only remember the following—

St. Dunstan's clock-work next attention draws ;
The sharpeners sport on many uplifted jaws.

This distich, however " lame and impotent," had some inspiration from truth, having noted pickpockets prowling in that quarter for their

game from the country. However, shortly after
I wrote what I conceived somewhat better—

UPON THE

HONOURABLE THOMAS ERSKINE.

Hail, Scotia, hail ! thou nurse of glory's race !
 Thrice happy matrons in your offspring's grace !
 And Albion happy, that with you reside
 Fair freedom's advocate and virtue's guide,
 Undaunted ERSKINE, who disdains to shrink,
 Though great men frown at what himself doth think ;
 Nor yet for Paine to miss his own applause,
 By giving politics religion's cause.
 Herschel ne'er counted of this northern star,
 The brightest pattern for the British bar :
 He, who ne'er yet had warm'd in fortune's ray,
 Spurn'd every lucre but his upright way ;
 He, who ne'er more could chill in adverse gale,
 Gratuitously urged the poor man's tale.
 Who hath not listen'd to the winning skill,
 Dissolves our prejudice and charms the will ?
 Who hath not mourn'd, in mute attention hung
 On sounds more plaintive than e'er poet sung ?
 Who hath not flown on wings of ERSKINE's fame,
 To melt with pity, or to brand with shame ?
 To take an inquest on the murder'd sleep
 Of nature's charities ; and while you weep

The verdict justice from your duty wrings,
 Bow to the peace that social honour brings ?
 Crime's gilded wheel we've traced, as it foregoes
 That golden hope an honest footstep knows.
 The poison'd fang of slander have assail'd
 To bite the lip, in malice that had fail'd.
 Oft have we pointed to the latent thorn
 Where us'rer's steal, counting of wealth unborn,
 The widow's tear; the orphan's right respected,
 The heartless guardian in his fraud detected.
 Can truth deny ? With ERSKINE at our side,
 Our follies sicken and we blush for pride :
 In purest dew his heav'nly accents fall,
 Earth is enrich'd, and angels sing them all.

About this period, I put on record the second marriage of my father. It is not usual for parents, on such occasions, to ask the approbation of their children ; and whether they do approve, or not, of this certainly important measure, when they write their memoirs, I trust, that the most inquisitive reader will excuse a delicate silence, when the venerable shade of a beloved father commands it. I mean to say, that although children may feel dissatisfied at any substitute for their own father or mother, they ought nevertheless to pay some respect to the feelings of others, nor condemn the holy institution of marriage, established

for the harmony, not discord of life. However, thus much the reader must know, that differences did exist but too frequently between my father and myself, and ultimately terminated (but not till I had stayed two years after the expiration of my articles with Mr. White, upon forty pounds per annum) in my flying in *despair* to another course of life, where perhaps there was but little to *hope*. I found my stipend, under the very peculiar and expensive circumstances with which I laboured, much too little for my support; and though I never coveted riches, and have since adopted for my motto—

“ Pauperiem, modico contentus, semper amavi;

“ Et rerum dominus, nil cupiendo, fui.”*

I was here in a situation, which it was impossible to keep without insurmountable embarrassments; for *that reason* it was I quitted the law, together with the improbability, that any of my ambitious hopes, or common respectability, in that profession could be realized. I saw my hopes in the light of an imaginary property, which I had cultivated with the most earnest ardour,

* Content with a little, I have ever loved poverty; and by desiring nothing, have been the master of every thing.

having frequently allotted nearly all the time I had for dinner to squeezing into court, and listening to the noble descendant of the house of Buchanan. But how I compared myself to the humble tenant of his African garden, when he views an approaching storm of locusts, extending perhaps a mile in length, alike darkening the inspiring sun and every expectation that conscious industry had nursed. My temper too was not of that smooth and unrippled surface, that is calculated to elevate its possessor, by "bowing as low to fools and knaves as to men of merit and virtue:" it was not

" — My talent to conceal my thoughts,
 " To carry smiles and sunshine in my face
 " When discontent sat heavy at my heart."

My temper might not be so captious as that of the noble propagator of our reformed religion, Martin Luther, is said to have been, any more than my merits and attainments came in comparison with his; but, like him, I should not have spared, in any just resentment, an Henry the Eighth, in fear of his regal power, or an Erasmus, from my admiration of his literary eminence. It may perhaps be a question, whether, in the policy of human affairs, and in our transactions with men whose order of the day alone is

"Self-preservation

"The first in the nation,"

I have not overstrained a sincerity of manner into cynical and morose imprudence, or what may very much wear that aspect. I believe whatever faults may be ascribed to my character, truth will be admitted as its prominent, though perhaps sometimes rude and impolite, feature. I always admired a passage of Philæmon, an ancient Grecian poet—

"Now, by the gods, it is not in the pow'r

"Of painting or of sculpture to express,

"Aught so divine as the fair form of truth!

"The creatures of their art may catch the eye,

"But her sweet nature captivates the soul."

This strict idolatry of truth sometimes may betray itself into an oblivion of other virtues; and probably anger may have glanced too frequently into my breast; where temperate reproof of any falsehood or injustice might have been better; though I trust my anger was never long-lived, but that I carried it

"——— As the flint bears fire,

"Which, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,

"And straight is cold again."

E

Of the imprudence of inconsiderate passion, I have always seen the folly, whether in myself or others. How many men have I, in my time, seen absolutely ruin themselves merely from headstrong passion !

“ Fortune makes quick dispatch; and in a day
 “ Can strip you bare as beggary itself.
 “ Grant that you now had piloted your bark
 “ Into good fortune’s haven, anchor’d there
 “ And moor’d her safe as caution could devise ;
 “ Yet if the headstrong passions seize the helm,
 “ And turn her out to sea, the stormy gusts
 “ Shall rise, and blow you out of sight of port
 “ Never to reach prosperity again.”

Amongst the various pursuits of the world there is one, against which a most powerful dislike prevails in the breast of many a good man. This dislike in my opinion is prejudice. Generous reader, it would give me severe pain to be certain I offended you, if it should happen that you share in that dislike which I may uncourteously—let me not fear ungratefully—denominate in my reflexions a prejudice. Amongst the noblest ranks I have found friends, and would fain preserve a delicacy of sentiment in return ; but my memoirs turn so much on this point, that did I scruple to keep back my own ideas, I should feel degraded,

although trembling at the possibility of insulting the opinion of the illustrious, the learned, or benevolent patron. This pursuit is the stage. To that my attention recurred for the last year of my residence in the law; and I finally followed the example which some predecessors had set.

“Not young attorneys have this rage withstood,
 “But changed their quills for truncheons, and their ink for blood,
 “And died—died nobly—for their country’s good.”

My case, notwithstanding, had this great difference—I adopted the profession, as the means of retiring from the eyes of the metropolis into the obscurity of the country, and under a feigned name (usual on the stage from motives of family-respect and secrecy) spare my relatives some portion of the regret I am willing to believe they experienced at this rash and desperate step. Having concerted the plan of a *début* with Mr. Brunton, the manager of the Norwich theatre, and whose company I had seen at Stirbitch-fair, I engaged a passage to Yarmouth by a merchant-vessel; and with two guineas in one pocket, and a few shillings in the other, did I, in despair of any respectability in the profession to which I had served my articles and stayed two years afterwards—did I

embark upon a venture of the greatest uncertainty ; and, oppressed with grief, resolved not to return to London an unsuccessful adventurer. My voyage resembled that of life :

“ Bound on a voyage of awful length,
 “ And dangers little known,
 “ A stranger to superior strength,
 “ Man vainly trusts his own ;
 “ But oars alone can ne’er prevail
 “ To reach the distant coast—
 “ The breath of heav’n must swell the sail,
 “ Or all the toil is lost.”

The tide suited early on a fine morn, who

“ — With her rosy steps in th’ eastern clime
 “ Advancing, sow’d the earth with orient pearl.”

or as Butler less dignified expresses it,

“ The sun had long since in the lap
 “ Of Thetis taken out his nap ;
 “ And, like a lobster boil’d, the morn
 “ From black to red began to turn.”

This latter description did not present itself to my mind on the occasion, for that was engrossed with imagery of the most tender and anxious cast. The importance of my success or failure on the

stage, the steps to be chosen in the event of my failure, the terrors inseparable from a first theatrical appearance, the double dangers of the sea in time of war, and the state of my purse, by turns pressed on my thoughts with indescribable alarm; add to this, I was given to understand, that if my reception with the public was favourable, there was no situation in the Norwich company, and most others were at great distance: but conscience told me, that I was only engaging in an effort to avoid pecuniary embarrassment in London; and that though this adventure might only bring penury, yet that the distance from town, and my change of name, would at least protect me from the mortification of being exposed to those who had known me and my family. I had been taught from a child to know conceptions of pride, and I found it wounded in the tenderest part, when my reputation for honesty was endangered. I knew I could not be justly styled the giddy votary of some darling chimaera, rushing upon the whirlwind of his vanity only to insure his accelerated ruin; I knew that filial impiety partook not of my intentions; I exulted in the reflexion, that no blind partiality for the drama had tempted an abandonment of the profession designed me before my articles expired; I had attained the age of more than twenty-one, knew my responsibility for whatever debts I might

contract, and therefore was at liberty, under existing circumstances, to make my choice among the chances of life's game.

Hamlet had been the character first designed for my opening ; but was afterwards changed for Romeo, on account of a great propensity towards imitating Kemble, which it was less probable would take place in the latter. I presumed upon my long acquaintance with the drama, yet had certain temporary qualms of " saucy doubts and fears" I must acknowledge. However, I relied upon that Being, whom my father had ever taught me to venerate when a boy, and the wisdom of whose worship I was old enough to appreciate. I called to recollection, and repeated often, that beautiful invocation of the Deity in Milton—

" ——— Thou celestial Light,
 " Shine inward, and the mind thro' all her pow'rs
 " Irradiate ; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
 " Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
 " Of things invisible to mortal sight."

Yes : a habit of serious reflexion had before this pervaded my thoughts ; and religion, with the evidences of Christianity often stole upon leisure moments ; and whenever I had heard the ad-

vancement of sceptical philosophy, repeated these lines from Dryden's *Religio Laici* :

- “ Or whether more abstractedly we look,
 “ Or on the writers; or the written book :
 “ Whence, but from heav'n, could men unskill'd in arts,
 “ In several ages born, in several parts,
 “ Weave such agreeing truths? Or how, or why,
 “ Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
 “ Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
 “ Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.”

The audience was very numerous and genteel, and, with gratitude to Yarmouth I must say, did more than justice to my inexperienced knowledge of the mechanical business of the stage. I was some time before I shook off the manacles of diffidence ; and though my dress was a great advantage (being an elegant white satin shape lent me by a Mr. Seymour, a most respectable actor in the company, since one of the legatees of the late Lord Chedworth's will, and a commentator upon Shakspeare), and though I had been advised to raise my chin more upon a level with the front boxes, and sometimes

“ *Erectos ad sidera tollere vultus,*”*

* To raise the countenance to the stars.

I felt unused to a heavy plume of feathers from the ostrich, and almost fancied myself metamorphosed into that bird, of whose celerity of flight I had several times a strong inclination to avail myself, and fly from the hunting critic: but the weight equalled the finery of my coiffure, where I might say

“ Thick, undistinguish’d plumes, together join’d,
“ Float in one sea and wave before the wind,”

and I fancied the ghost of Churchill reciting from his *Rosciad* these severe truths—

“ Awkward, embarrass’d, stiff, without the skill
“ Of moving gracefully; or standing still.
“ One leg, as if suspicious of his brother,
“ Desirous seems to run away from t’other.”

Still I acquired by degrees greater and greater confidence, until an accident in the fifth act, in the very acme of theatric pride, when I was assured of convincing my audience of my talents by the sympathy of their tears, at the distressing conclusion of the play, what was my astonishment to find, that some few were laughing! I must give Yarmouth the credit of owning, that this laugh was not general, in compliment to the especial

feelings of a novice: the cause was, that the lining of my mourning suit was *white*; and that in taking out the purse of gold for the apothecary, as well as the *fatal* poison, the pocket also, being narrow, came quite out, and communicated to the risible sensations a notion of poor Romeo's chemise. Alas, poor Juliet! that she should suffer too. She was also a young candidate for fame, and hoped from the crowded house that night to rivet those fetters of admiration she had deservedly prepared on preceding evenings.

“ Væ! misero mihi, quanta de spe decidi.”*

Was it not vexatious, that a tailor's neglect, in either not using black lining or tacking the bottom of the pocket in confinement, should be able to strangle two lovers, already doomed to death, and huddle them so abruptly into a premature and grotesque grave? Surely such contempt merited a mandamus from the court of Helicon, on the motion of Shakspeare's much injured shade, to claim a mock-heroic dart from the quiver of his genius, serving as a sequel to the dramatic piece of *The Tailors*, and for the benefit of some

* Alas! miserable me, from how great hope have I fallen!

F

favourite low comedian.* Mr. Brunton gave me a letter of recommendation to another company who were playing at Lowestoft; but before I carry my reader to that beautiful bathing-town, there are two accounts to be settled at Yarmouth: one is the debt of gratitude for the politeness and kind advice of Mr. Brunton and his family, among whom was the present Lady Craven; the other is an account of what evil temptation may present itself to a harrassed and distressed mind, and also what triumph in resisting it results from the seeds of moral and religious principles sown in the spring of youth. It is not to be expected that reflexion and anxiety were often absent, but rather that they would also intrude another unwelcome guest, named melancholy, and not always that

“ — Divinest melancholy,
 “ Whose saintly image is too bright
 “ To hit the sense of human sight;”

but more frequently that saturnine melancholy, who

* Alluding to the mock tragedy of *The Tailors*, brought out on Downton's benefit, and which was strongly opposed by the tailors.

“ ——— Round us throws

“ A death-like silence and a dread repose :

“ Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,

“ Shades ev’ry flow’r and darkens ev’ry green,

“ Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,

“ And breathes a browner horror o’er the woods.”

Leaning over the draw-bridge, and dejectedly gazing on the flood beneath, an idea shot like Lucifer through my brain, promising, with guileful argument, a speedy termination to all my cages. Guess, if thou canst, what it was. I will whisper in thine ear, for I dread and shame to speak it out—it was—pardon me, heaven!—it was—suicide! Here I plead guilty to the weakness and the sin of human nature. I pleaded guilty then. I hurried from the spot on which I stood with rapid step, shuddered at the suggestions of a surprized moment, and that was all the punishment heaven allowed to be inflicted. What earthly law, for the least offence, if broken, would not have imposed a sharper penalty. The sigh of repentance and resolve of duty were the only sacrifice that, it seemed, heaven required; and I was happy. I remembered my father’s opinion upon suicide, which he had often given—
 “ That it betrayed cowardice, as well as impiety,
 “ to shrink from your duty with a fear so mean
 “ and servile.”

Since that moment, I have ever felt courage, or resolutely assumed it, to look danger and misfortune in the face ; and ever felt ashamed to skulk from the post which providence had chosen to assign me. Previous to my attempt upon the stage I had written a defence of it, which Mr. Brunton and others were pleased very much to compliment ; and in this place, it will be no more, perhaps, than proper to speak my present sentiments upon the subject, and I hope that my reader, however his notions may differ, will not be offended at the disclosure of mine. I divide my consideration into that of the drama, and that of its professor. The former is sanctioned by the Lord Chamberlain, as having nothing offensive to religion or politics ; and the professed moral at least is virtue. The professor of such a pursuit, reason tells me, should be respected in the most liberal light. I admit that many scenes of the older drama, perhaps some of the modern, notwithstanding the precaution of our legislature, are not strictly compatible with delicacy ; and that even in many popular plays, the moral tendency is very equivocal : and, when looking into every human institution, no where can we meet perfection. Still it were to be wished, that the drama might be purified immaculately ; and every passage, point, or situation, derogatory to so-

ciety, totally expunged, however entertaining or popular it might be : but I am sanctioned by some of the noblest characters in my belief, that the drama upon the whole does good. I have seen it do good myself, and am indebted to its noble sentiments for the confirmation of my own better principles. It is the unrivalled school for pure pronunciation, the nursery of music, and an assistant to the painter. I conceive there cannot well be a more rational amusement than the legitimate drama of John Bull.

How then comes it, that the profession is so disrespected by many of the most liberal ? Indecencies and immorality perhaps equally steal into the works of sculpture, painting, and poetry ; yet their professors are never upbraided with their occupation. Terence and Shakspeare have their indecencies written for the actors, yet the former must be admitted to immortal honours. True that in our generous country there is the widest courtesy bestowed upon the actor of any nation now existing ; and I believe I may defy ancient Athens, where actors were shown the highest honours, to produce corresponding lustre of character with most of the performers on the English boards : and I think firmly, that were certain prejudices entirely done away, it would encourage

the number of good men to increase. Can the heraldry of British eminence derive higher brilliancy, than it does from a Countess of Derby, or a Lady Craven? Can the tender offices of charity be ministered with a less sparing hand than that of Mrs. Coutts?—she, whose benevolence controuls the rigour of the poor man's winter; and as they circle round his comfortable hearth, gratitude bids him view the cheerful countenances of his children by the blaze of her compassion—she, who has been said to have administered in one winter to one hundred families, including sixty-nine wives, and two hundred and ninety children. From my experience of the profession, I found, whatever were their fortunes, there were characters of opposite complexions; yet certainly no trivial proportion in the number displayed qualities of heart and understanding, which shed honour on their employment.

I played Octavian at Lowestoft with as much success as I expected, and for a short time obtained an engagement at the important salary of ten shillings and sixpence per week. I soon obtained a more favourable offer from a company in Staffordshire, at Litchfield—a long distance, and in the depth of winter, and no benefit. I passed Cambridge in my way, where an aunt assisted a

little my finances, to enable me to accomplish my journey. But here I experienced a loss that inflicted the most alarming detriment upon my adventures—this was nothing less than the total miscarriage of my trunk, leaving me, amongst strangers, almost without a change of linen. This luggage I had entrusted to the care of certain persons, to be forwarded by the coach for Litchfield, but from that hour to this, however mysterious, I never received it.

Fortune seemed to pity this unexpected stroke, gave me greater success in the line of life I had entered, whilst I felt proud of dating this prosperity from a city, where Johnson and Garrick had spent a fragment of their days. In this company I had soon an example “of the altered turns of chance,” in the case of a performer who had been the hero of the company and a great benefit-maker; but, from a disagreement with the manager, he received his discharge. He fell sick; and as his benefit had owed more to the expensive company he kept (a policy too often adopted by the profession) than his merits, his usual hauteur was starved to keep his now humble self alive. This man shortly after, from being surrounded with a family I think of nine children, found himself a widower and childless: his chil-

men rotted to death with that fatal disorder, the small pox, yielding in succession every few minutes to the arms of death : his wife too, before a great lapse of time, took a fatal fever and followed her lamented children. From a mistaken compliment to nature, this affectionate parent's prejudice against vaccination forfeited him those kind endearments, which seldom fail to bless us in the pledges of our connubial love. Public characters need no domestic cares ; for as Cumberland in his life observes—" They who are to act in the public eye, and speak in the public ear, have no right to expect a very smooth and peaceful career." This person also, I have been told, was very unsuccessful on the Irish boards—a mortification no little enhanced from this pursuit of misfortune to his native city.

Dr. Johnson has made an observation which, I have often had occasion to think, would apply to the stage-profession ; although whatever other failings I might have to lament, I must conceive myself one among many exceptions. " A long acquaintance with fortuitous companions is apt to beget habits of insincerity." It would be tedious to recount all the instances of perfidy and ingratitude, even of the quantity I have not yet been able to forget ; but a few must transpire,

to illustrate the ordeals through which my temper has had to pass, and in some degree apologize for any infirmity of tone, it may have taken. A Mr. R. at this time in Newcastle under Lyne, whom the profession and that neighbourhood will soon recognize when I describe him, the low comedian, short of stature, and not over high in dignity or delicacy. This man had been repeatedly before discharged for his drunken and riotous conduct; but, out of pity for his family, his wife was retained. They were much necessitated from living upon one salary. It was customary for two performers to share a benefit—his wife and I were lotted together. The weather proved bad, and ruined the night. I resolved to give an olio at the Town-Hall, after obtaining the Mayor's permission, at the close of the season; and feeling for Mrs. R. and husband's situation, consented to her becoming joint proprietor in this important speculation, of whose success there could be little doubt. I did not like to refuse the offer of his comic services, expecting that, on this occasion at least, he would abstain from intoxication. A beastly and disgraceful reverse was the case, and I was openly insulted for not allowing him a portion of the profits, besides his wife, and only retaining one third myself. This was not the only instance of his ingratitude and

vulgarity to me, as well as the public : and is one of those incorrigible disgraces to the profession of an actor, that draws down tenfold prejudice upon his betters, who, while he is sitting in the chimney-corner of some inferior pot-house, entertaining the refuse of society with his buffoonery, to fill the gallery on his benefit (yet neglecting to perfect himself in the business he has assigned him in the theatre) are creditably closetted the while at home, preparing themselves for the duties they owe the public, whether their characters are to be serious or ludicrous.

Some few years after this I also met with this more flagrant ingratitude : it was my proposal to the public to play a few nights in each town two entertainments, I had written for the purpose, comprising selections from the English classics. A Mr. P. had been discharged from the company, and, the period of his notice to quit expiring before the other performers took their benefits, he was denied one. He waited in the town till the benefits finished, and I gave him the use of this entertainment in the assembly-room of the town. Not a hundred years after, when the memory might be thought superannuated, this identical gentleman, being snugly situated in another company, and perhaps having

a jealous apprehension of his not monopolizing the good graces of an audience, 'absolutely and point-blank refused to play at all for my benefit; although in the example I have just before related, I was the *only* one who performed for *him*. Respecting the two entertainments I have mentioned; some of the inhabitants of Swaffham in Norfolk may remember, that having, previously to their performance received an anonymous letter not very courteous, on the subject, I placed it in the most conspicuous part of that town, signed with my answer and name at full. An anonymous reply succeeded as my answer and name again, and in fact a paper war of this description—poetical and prose. My antagonists had attacked my entertainments, whose contents they but anticipated before they made their appearance; and therefore it is not to be wondered, that they declined with the contest the illiberal attempt to prejudge the public against what they never saw. Some of the party whom I had just grounds for suspecting of this cruel attack, have since paid the debt of nature; and therefore to dwell longer on the matter would appear to me unmanly and contemptible.

There is another being, which Norfolk brings to my remembrance, whose power I have to thank

for depriving me wantonly of one situation ; and who afterwards having it in his option to make amends, which he seemed to promise, impudently and unfeelingly refused it. This creature is a well-known deceiver of actors. I lately observed he had not quitted the county, for I saw him on the sea-beach, and the cloudy day, united to my own gloomy conceptions of his character (for I cannot find he has lost his character) brought to my recollection these lines of Savage:

“ Darkling he glides along the dreary coast,
 “ A sullen, wand’ring, self-tormented ghost.”

Yet still I will essay to follow

“ — A life my foes may learn to live,
 “ And hold it still a triumph to forgive.”

Near Newcastle under Lyne, in a village church-yard, I remember to have seen a very striking epitaph, and which may not be unacceptable to the moral reader :

“ C*****s B*****w came to visit me with half a pint of
 “ poison: write this on my grave, that all who read it may
 “ see.”

I forget the name of the young woman whom

the stone covered ; but, from what I learned, she must probably be in the recollection of many now living in those quarters, if not of the C****, B****w, who I understood was then in existence. At the same time, I know nothing of the truth of the charge or the parties. The accusation may be the invention of some slanderous wretch ; and it would give me uneasiness, if, in gratifying my horror at this inscription, I should sanction the unmerited disgrace of my neighbour.

In these quarters I remember one of the instances which life has to record of palpable hypocrisy, and I am concerned to add, in a female—a Mrs. S****t. A Mr. W****n was our manager, and nearly all the company were dissatisfied with an unusually long and expensive journey we had taken into Wales, as well as other vexatious oppressions : nor was this Mrs. S****t the most temperate of any in her animadversions during his absence. One day, however, rendered it absolutely imperative that I should speak to him my complaints, and endeavour to remonstrate. He proved passionately restive under the observations I made, and was coming up quick time to me with clenched fists, apparently to *mill* (that I believe is the technical term now among the *fancy* of pugilists for *punishing* with blows).

This amiable mediator instantly stepped between, and exclaimed with all the pathos of theatrical deception—" You shall not strike my dear Mr. " W****n !"—and warmly deprecated my injustice. I left them with this quotation from Hamlet—

" Man delights not me—no, nor woman neither."

I could recount cases of much deeper hypocrisy, but having mentioned some examples, by no means the worst, as proofs of human corruption, I hope they will suffice to guard the unwary youngster, who, warmed and delighted with the sunshine of society and the thousand charms of vegetation's face, may unsuspectingly grasp a nettle, as well as thoughtlessly crush the rose-bud.

My time in Wales was so short, that it would be illiberal to form a general conception of the modern Cambrian in the small circles I passed ; but I must own a generous familiarity in the higher classes I encountered—a boon that imparted pleasure to remember, and served to level in fatigue the " lofty mountain's weary side," after a long walk on my return to Shrewsbury.

This company breaking up, I was engaged to

join another in Staffordshire; but, after a long and distressing journey, when I congratulated myself on nearly reaching the destined town, I was informed that the manager, disappointed of his licence for Ashby de la Zouch, had suddenly dissolved his company; but had lent them some scenery and dresses to try their fortunes in the neighbouring villages, until the lapse of a few months, when he should reopen his scheme. This republic I was compelled to enter, and resolved to be as cheerful as possible, besides entering into the true spirit of the stage-struck hero. In one little village, where we exclaimed "Here pitch our tent," we had not asked any sort of permission or forbearance from one magistrate, owing to the incorrectness of our information. But, alack and a well-a-day! poor Shakspeare's text was lamentably true, when Richard began,

"Now is the winter of our discontent——"

behold the actor and the usurper's government met at once their revolution, from the indubitable authority of that ancient ambassador to Thespis, vulgarly yclepped a constable. "Winter of discontent" it was—credit and finances sympathized. However, as our seats were erected, and we explained to the satisfaction of the gentleman,

he promised not to molest us for three nights. - At this critical juncture of our commonwealth-treasury, one of our itinerant band received a *carte blanche* from an established community, with the proffer of a good salary. His desertion of us was a new source of trouble ; but he pleaded *in forma pauperis* :* that I could have forgiven him, but—Melpomene hears it and blushes—he jested upon the sign of the inn where we exhibited, which, by one of those singular concurrences of circumstance that sometimes do happen, was nothing less than The Shoulder of Mutton: Says he, “ Call it the sign of disappointment, for the “ painter and the poverty-struck place are equally “ worthless.” He then quoted my address, which I had written in confidence to the artist—

E'en the hungry you tempt not, you only deter,
For your mutton's a cross-breed I like not, good sir :
You may tantalize some, who deceived by your paint,
May *think* of the larder, but stroll till they faint.

Feeling indignant at this treachery and obliged to resent my own squib cast at our village hotel and histrionic importance, I at last advised with my compeers, and pronounced that this

averr'd

* Poverty.

traitor would endanger the state unless we pronounced his instant banishment in form. I therefore drew up with my own hand our state proclamation to this tenor and effect :

The muses abjure thee, thou mortal glutton !
 Hence ! nor profane our sacred shoulder of mutton—
 Sacred to the happiest mental recreation,
 Where suffering heroes still adorn their station.
 Take of our coffers—two shillings passport. Go—
 Two shillings' share for strutting to and fro—
 Quit our bright realms, and court the shades below.

In our excursions round the country villages I saw much to admire, in contrast to the smoky metropolis, or even the pride of the large market-town. The air assisted my health, and the rustic scenery diverted my cares. I loved to study the volume of nature, and to be introduced to her charms, free from the masquerade of affectation, paint, dissipation, and hauteur. When rising in the morning, it was the soother of my soul to view “ a healthy young fellow between the handles of a plough,” and allow him to be “ the noblest illustration of the prosperity of Great Britain.” I was charmed to see the industrious cottager's wife preparing with her own clean hands (certainly no fashionable cook's could be cleaner) her husband's breakfast, to see

H

“ ———The shepherd tell his tale
 “ Under the hawthorn in the dale——”

to see

“ The milkmaid blithe——”

see that fortune had endowed her, besides her
 cheerful labour,

“ ———With beauty, but denied the pelf,
 “ That buys her sex a tyrant o’er itself.”

Well, says I to myself, this at least will agree with
 my health, better than the mewed up climate of
 the Court of King’s Bench. My Lord Mayor’s
 show I allowed to be pleasing, but this was a
 change—to enquire the rough husbandman’s no-
 tions of this world and the future—to see his
 chubby offspring

“ ——— Who spread the bloom
 “ Of health around the clay-built room,
 “ Or thro’ the primrosed coppice stray,
 “ Or gambol in the new-mown hay,
 “ Or quaintly braid the cowslip-twine,
 “ Or drive afield the tardy kine,
 “ Or hasten from the sultry hill
 “ To loiter at the shady rill,

" Or climb the tall pine's gloomy crest

" To rob the antient raven's nest :"

and, if I never encountered the Man of Ross, I have certainly in many a village and country town of my travels, in Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, and other counties, found the parish blessed in an amiable minister—

" ——— The messenger of truth,

" By whom the violated law speaks out

" Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet

" As angels use, the gospel whispers peace :

" He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,

" Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart."

The few months passed in this village-tour, though not profitable in money, had charms that I felt the want of in many towns afterwards. Indeed, one instance soon after manifested itself in a lodging I was recommended to, with an antient couple, who had formerly followed the Thespian route, but were now retired upon a little property of the wife's. With such people, I thought happiness a certain inmate, and that I was in favour with fortune, to reside in such a house, where I could sit with the master and mistress, and chat about theatricals, &c. : but here I saw a proof, that two old persons, blessed with

the means of finishing their journey through life most comfortably, will not always accept the blessings providence has showered upon them. It was not now and then merely "a little domestic thunder to clear away the vapours." In about a week and a half, I had found the matrimonial elements rattle so uninterruptedly, that I was induced to change my quarters. This pair were well known at Uttoxeter in Staffordshire.

"They back'd their feeble want of sense
 "With greater heat and confidence,
 "As bones of Hectors, when they differ,
 "The more they're cudgell'd are the stiffer."

The first specimen of this discouraging strife, which I, a single man, was compelled to witness, was just as I had finished the motto, and was proceeding to indulge myself with Lord Lyttleton's charming verses on his lamented wife. S——s had taken a longer walk out than usual, I believe, that afternoon, and kept her tea-equipe waiting. I had read over the third time, so pleased was I with the subject of conjugal affection—

"Te dulcis conjux, te solo in littore secum,
 "Te veniente die, te decedente canebat."*

* I have abstained from any other than my native tongue

Mr. S——s now entered when

“ A shower of china, in a whirlwind sent,

“ Just intimates the lady's discontent.”

Another time, the parties were exchanging their usual compliments, when the cloth was laid for supper. It being a rule not to interfere with man and wife, I took Collins's Poems out of my pocket, and chanced upon this line, which: (not wishing to seem to notice their change of looks, &c.) I read out—

“ Cold is her breast, like flow'rs that drink the dew.”

Mrs. S——s.

“ Go and draw the beer, you devil, do.”

Off he hurries, without apologizing, with the candle, and I, confused yet wishing still not to appear to notice, endeavour to repeat by rote; but for *silken* went on by mistake—

“ A *blacken'd* veil conceals her from the view.”

He returning and trembling—

in compliment to the reader, and especially the female. A translation would destroy (I think) the beauty; but the subject is a matrimonial effusion of tenderness.

Mrs. S——s:

“ There! I knew you’d spill it—you always do.”

The contrast of this rhyme made me smile; but we got our suppers together tolerably well, till towards the conclusion. I saw

“ The madness rise,”

and some Xantippe-looks discovered; that either some new cause of offence was discovered or the old not pardoned; and though we had in conversation during supper chanced upon some droll theatric anecdotes, I now recollected these lines—

“ ———— When the banquet’s o’er

“ The reck’ning comes, the dreadful reck’ning,

“ And men smile no more:”

and shortly after (their differences proceeding to extremes), the table and its contents were overthrown; and having no disposition, as many would, to

“ Smile on the tumult and enjoy the storm,”

preferred the jargon of a public house for that night, and the next slept under the roof of a

more respectable lodging, where the obligations of reciprocal esteem seemed to be more decently acknowledged, and the silken bands of marriage were not wickedly converted into fetters of imaginary thralldom.

The ghost in Hamlet acquired me no little applause in this town, and it was applause more valued from the respectable hands which paid it. I had taken considerable pains with it, became more accustomed to the mechanical business of the stage, and from studying characters of various descriptions, I was always able to obtain an engagement, if ever the tyranny of managerial power (I had sometimes to lament) rendered the expence of a change unavoidably necessary.

It was in the circuit of this company that I was gratified with an example of wine speaking the truth. Returning from supper with a friend, I encountered an actor of the name of P——e, intoxicated, and involved in a quarrel with some low-bred fellows, which was not likely to benefit either his person or character, if pushed to the extent of which he seemed desirous. I persuaded him with much difficulty to go home with me, and his gratitude manifested itself in an acknowledgment of some prior injustice to me.

In the rounds of this company I remember, that one day an ignorant man (who perhaps would bow and flatter an actor that might employ him to any advantage) mistook the principal inhabitant of the town as he passed for an actor of the same stature and also in mourning, and therefore did not pay his wonted bow ; but the gentleman returning, he discovered his mistake, and felt very agitated lest the gentleman should be offended : accordingly he apologized thus—" Sir, " I most humbly beg you ten thousand pardons, " but I took you just now for Mr. — the " player. I hope, sir, you will not be offended." On which the gentleman asked him why he should be offended—a question that at least confounded him. This gentleman was a clergyman, and his generosity brought to mind, from Melmoth's Letters of Fitzosborn, this passage—" Religion, without this sovereign principle, degenerates into a slavish fear, and wisdom into " a specious cunning ; learning is but the avarice " of the mind, and wit its more pleasing kind of " madness." If this man had ever suffered by the actor he thought of, he might have been right ; but my opinion is, prejudices are the general bane of society.

I knew a person once, who conceived another

to be a fool because he lisped very badly, and in a money-transaction presumed upon his superior understanding ; but the lisping stranger had calculated accurately, and not in haste, and found himself the material gainer by the bargain. Had I fifty children to send into the world, I would recommend none to follow the profession of the stage ; but the first lesson I would impress upon their minds, I think would be—" Get rid of your "vulgar prejudices, learn to respect merit and "virtue wherever you find them." What has done more mischief in the world than prejudice ? To enumerate every case would exceed the limit of our life ; but let me ask history, what but prejudice opposed the views of Columbus ; and how much impolicy did it reflect upon the Genoese, Venetians, French, English, and for a long time Spain ? What cruelty did prejudice inflict upon the monk, who was imprisoned because he first discovered the rotundity of the earth ? What prejudice did not the hero, who first captured Gibraltar, suffer from the insignificant value set upon his important services ? Mere prejudice against Demosthenes, because his delivery was bad, had nearly deprived the public of his value, till Satyrus, an actor (no doubt used to prejudice) saw the man's talents, and instructed him to set them off with a more graceful and happy

speech. The figure and manner of St. Paul prejudiced his worth; and if it is not too great a liberty to introduce the blessed Author of Redemption, may I not demand, was it not prejudice against the Son of a Carpenter that blinded the eyes of his enemies? At the same time I do not mean to deny, but that prejudices may exist in very exalted breasts, affording the most lucid instance of deficiency of perfection in the human character.

During my theatrical career, I have to thank fortune for granting me patience and prudence to overcome difficulties of a pecuniary kind, without falling the abject martyr to their casualties which some have. On such occasions, the want of a dinner, or refusal once of a manager to lend half a guinea (though he could have done it, and had no reason to fear remuneration), was not the most galling task to endure; but the prying eye of curiosity into your secret anguish, and the doubts of character starving. In the age I have lived, it is perhaps selfish to advert upon my own tribulation, nor compassionate the highest and the succeeding ranks, whose virtues have been no ægis against the shafts of revolutionary or war adversities: yet "although thousands may have tasted
" of thee," misery, "thou art no less bitter on

"that account ;" and most especially at that moment, when the fever of uneasiness may have lain you sickening on the bed of horrors, the garrison of your long-concealed wretchedness betrayed by your health to the contemplation of an indispensable physician. Yes, there are who know with me that, when the tyrant necessity invades successfully the very capitol of economy, no rank can protect our pride ; no conscious integrity can rescue feelings hurled prostrate before the victor's car ; and though generosity may pause to pay an unaffected and mournful tribute, yet the ruffian-associates, malice and cruelty, will exult their full, and leave you but the last though certainly best resource—a patient submission to divine disposal. Let the unhappy feel this consolation from the unerring sentiment of Dodsley, that " though the first unexpected access of ill
 " may surprize the soul into grief, yet that grief,
 " when the mind calmly reviews its object,
 " changes into contentment, and is by degrees
 " exalted into veneration and a divine composure ; our private will is lost in that of the Almighty ; and our security against every real ill
 " rests on the same bottom as the throne of Him,
 " who lives and reigns for ever. He therefore,
 " who is provided with such armour, taken, if we
 " may say so, from the armoury of heaven, may

“ be proof against the sharpest arrows of fortune,
 “ and defy the impotence of human malice.”

Upon this occasion, perhaps, it may not be very irrelevant to introduce my verses on the missionaries, Swartz and Martyn, which I wrote after becoming a subscriber to and advocate for their benevolent societies.

ON THE MISSIONARY, SWARTZ.

BRITAIN, I quit—my muse demands—thy shore,
 To search for Swartz, yet find, alas! no more.
 Borne on ethereal plumage has he flown
 To better friends, the virtues made his own.
 To vulgar minds his couch a vision seems:
 They guess not half the bliss an angel dreams.

The rapt'rous peal of orphans hymn his worth,
 And happy widows celebrate his birth.
 Orphan no more, nor widow more distrest,
 You've found a relative of relatives the best:
 His sure direction was that safe belief
 That finds a home—a father—but no grief.

O India, shout till echo mount the spheres—
 Your converts blush to own a brahmin's fears:

Again to blaze forbid the funeral pile,
 Nor buried life unnaturally defile:
 Complete the measure, which your Swartz begun,
 And own his type alone the glorious sun—
 That brilliant blessing, to our northern eyes,
 Looks orient Swartz invited to the skies,
 Whose last beams promise, as they leave the earth,
 A second rising of superior worth.

ON THE MISSIONARY, MARTYN.

YE sons of Cam, but most St. John, I hail;
 Hail thee thy honours and thy loss bewail.
 Martyn, no pedant of dogmatic pride,
 "Fought the good fight" upon religion's side:
 Bent all his learning to that happiest end,
 That points to heav'n along the ways we mend.
 Boast not, Golconda, of thy brilliant stores;
 Luxuriant Asia, what you send our shores:
 We give you Martyn, the physician sure,
 Cleansing your reason, and the soul to cure
 Of lep'rous maladies, your drugs not aid,
 But ask the bible for which Sabat* pray'd—
 Sabat, converted from the Koran's guile,
 From superstition to the Christian's smile.

* Sabat, a convert,

It was my misfortune to be compelled, from the slender income I owed the company last glanced at, to enter another where the two managers divided with their profits an equal share of enmity. Some performers courted one side, some the other. I could not but unwillingly hear the cause of dispute, I could not but entertain my own judgment as to the party most blameable; yet it was my maxim, in cases of this kind, never apparently to heed, or, if positively appealed to, evade an answer by lamenting the injury they might sustain, in common with the company, whose union and respectability could be but little advanced by internal strife and opposition of interests: but the notion seemed to prevail, that seeming or even avowed neutrality must be hypocrisy; and the order of the day became—"He that is not for me is against me." I received civilities from one side denied me by the other, and I would not suffer the kindness to pass unnoticed; at the same time, I never offered any observation, but what might lead to reconciliation. But from visiting the one, and meeting it at some respectable tables in the towns, the jealousy of the other was roused to the most unwarrantable, and tempted to the meanest, manifestations of its revenge. Among many parallels was this—I had of late been in the habit of writing

addresses and pieces for the stage, which were but too prosperous in their reception before, to create me cordiality behind, the curtain.

The greatest malady which in my mind preys upon the health of the stage is, the continual clashing of opposite interests in regard to benefits: it may conjure up the spirit of emulation, it may feed the embers of an interested flame, it may consolidate a species of theatrical constitution, wherein the prosperity of the manager is upheld by the support of the performer; but in my discernment, I never could trace part of the surviving prejudices against an actor to any source more inflaming, than the many shifts, tricks, and humiliating budgets of ways and means, but too often practised off the boards by many to make a benefit. To make a bumper-benefit, how many have been led into extravagancies of company, sobriety, and time! How many may have "set the table in "a roar" to catch applause, the earnest of a benefit; and yet would leave the town no richer, nor yet reflect one ray of lasting reputation on the manager! How many I fear, have taken the most illicit steps to oust their fellow professor, traveller, and labourer, out of the fair estimation he had earned through honourable industry in his profession, joined to an irreproachable integrity

in his private character ! I admit that every state of life is tarnished by the dregs of its members ; I lament to own, that the lowest plebeian, and without the aid of an Herschel's telescope, may discover spots upon the luminary of the highest and most brilliant orb of pursuit, or, to speak more plainly, I grieve for the corruption of human kind, of which every occupation is composed : but I decry every palpable provocation of natural vice ; and think, that the ambition of an actor might be kept from sinking into torpor, or waken to livelier energies, by other rewards than a benefit, whilst neither the comfort, sincerity, interests, or augmenting reputation of the company would deteriorate by the abolition of a suffrage, given very frequently to the private canvass, and not the professional intent.

The addresses and dramatic pieces I had written and produced at my benefits, were efforts that I thought consistent with the reputation of my calling ; but although these were read and met the approbation of the manager, they stumbled on many impediments thrown enviously in their way. In this company, one of the manager's ladies read my piece of the Haunted Village, and preferred her part : the evening before the performance she chose to decline it without assigning

any sufficient reason. She was the favourite actress of the company, and therefore her secession was nearly the discomfiture intended: however, the other manager's daughter, a young lady of promising talents and distinguished character, generously stepped forward without regard to professional pride, or the shortness of the time, to enable the piece to proceed, and receive (notwithstanding the want of support in many cases it suffered) a success, not more flattering to myself than to the merits of my fair protectress.

Having lately heard an instance of envy still more contemptible, where a peaceable gentleman's briar, the pride and pleasure of its nurse; could not stay the ruthless and malignant executioner, I have made it the subject of reflection, and hope it may be acceptable in this place.



" LATET ANGUIS IN HERBA."*

1.

'Twas early the dawn,
'Fore the call of horn—
'Tis so the gossips relate—
From her restless bed
Envy twitch'd her head,
From fear she should be too late.

2.

' Light barely to see
' The best secures me,
' To filch Eurydice's place;
' For something I'll do.
' That most Proserpine rue,
' Her spouse ever witness'd my face.

3.

' Should Orpheus but play
' The lyre his best way,
' In manner as I've advised;
' I certes can't fail,
' Nor Pluto bewail,
' Th' exchange my merits apprized.

* The snake lies concealed in the grass.

4.

' Yet some deed is fit,
 ' Where beauty nor wit
 ' Can aid my elevation,
 ' That Tartarus see
 ' No fury like me
 ' Can aid its ministration.

5.

' But why do I talk
 ' And my purpose balk ?
 ' Ere sleep has quitted the just,
 ' Yon neighbour's briar
 ' Shall grow no higher,
 ' Shall bury its sweets in dust.

6.

' Its doom I decree—
 ' A bas'lisk to me
 ' The owner if longer it charm.
 ' So wave my black wand,
 ' Earth's blessings despond,
 ' Rise Phœbus and blush for the harm !

7.

' Now tell me each fiend,
 ' Who malice near wean'd,
 ' Were ever your feats like mine ?
 ' Durst candidate stand
 ' 'Gainst my blasting hand,
 ' With Pluto's offer'd to twine.



8.

' I hear Cerberus bark,
' He hates the blithe lark
' Should blissfully open day;
' Bids spirits depart
' Of horrible heart,
' And steal to council away.'



Yet I must pay the tribute of thanks to those performers in this and other companies, who, on similar occasions, have zealously exerted themselves (and amongst the number is the present Mr. Richard Jones of Covent-Garden Theatre) to save from the fiat of disgrace the humble bantling of a brother performer.

It is common in the benefit-season to be asked in some way to oblige; and I cannot remember to have ever denied that favour to those, who have laboured to injure the character, they knew they could not consistently with gratitude refuse to undertake, as a reciprocal obligation. However, I have the happy consolation to know, though it cost me many a struggle to bring them before the public, that my writings were asked

for perusal by many respectable friends; and that my *Haunted Village* was thought deserving the closet of the learned Dr. Orme, of Louth in Lincolnshire, with a compliment from him, of which a less humble author might be proud, and tempted to proclaim.

During one winter I passed in this respected town of Louth, there existed that friendly intercourse between the different ranks of the country town, that enlivened each and, in my opinion, degraded none. During the hours of a long evening in winter, from whose *ennui* thousands in other country towns have flown to cards, to drink, or to scandal, a society of no little respectability was established in Louth, under the presidency of an elderly clergyman, for the debate of questions on moral and philosophical subjects. This amusement of time, and I hope improvement of the mind, was not less elevated by the erudition and genius of some sensible members, than won into a profound decency of order by the age, the impartiality, and temperance of its venerable president, upon whose quitting the chair at an early hour, the amateurs of music adjourned to another apartment, and enjoyed with moderation the charms of an hour or two's amicable conversation in supplement to the strains of Phœbus. Some

time after this, I have also to record the kind and never-to-be-forgotten notices of the late Lord Galway in Yorkshire, owing, as I had learned, to some poetry of his humble servant's accidentally meeting his perusal.

Soon after, in a smart little cottage, I enjoyed awhile the tranquil blandishments of seclusion, a mile out of the town in which I played—another scene of rustic peace, order, and cleanliness, where the family-china in a corner cupboard was of itself a feast for contemplation, where

“ Cup faces cup, each saucer has its brother,
“ And half the sideboard just reflects the other.”

Here I indulged a reverie, undisturbed by clamorous cries, or the curious eye of affected visitors: it was here I had the happiest opportunity of lifting my thoughts and gratitude to heaven. The sprightly lark was the only visitor I saw, and by him I was often reminded to sing my poetic diversions to the glory of the enlivening sky. He reminded me of Cowley's lines, which I applied to my own humility and praise; and

“ Above the clouds let my proud music sound,
“ My humble nest built on the ground.”

Here I sighed not for riches, but enough to support the necessities of nature, and but little else; for I was ever of Addison's mind in that—
 “ The middle station of life seems to be the most
 “ advantageously situated for the gaining of wisdom. Poverty turns our thoughts too much
 “ upon the supplying of our wants, and riches
 “ upon enjoying our superfluities :” and with Dryden I ever noticed, that

“ Rarely they rise by virtue's aid, who lie
 “ Plunged in the depths of helpless poverty.”

My rural retreat was at last interrupted by the noisy nocturnal rides and contention of smugglers; and these suggested to me the folly of their ventures, and the following lines:

THE SMUGGLER.

The false step, that violates the laws of our country, often leads to irretrievable ruin.

‘ Ho! Kate: come hither, darling wench.
 ‘ When ruthless fate did from us wrench
 ‘ Nell, your mother and your likeness too,
 ‘ I gave her on her death-bed, dove,
 ‘ Another vow of Hubbard’s love—
 ‘ Never to wed a second wife,
 ‘ At least while you had life.

‘ You then was sick, and cradled lay,
 ‘ Grasping two shells I’d brought away
 ‘ From foreign shores for baby Kate,
 ‘ Who seem’d diverted by her prate.
 ‘ Your mother seem’d revived to hear
 ‘ The promise of her Hubbard dear;
 ‘ Knew from a lad, thro’ every storm,
 ‘ Never could this oaken heart deform
 ‘ A lie: it was my father’s boast;
 ‘ And every neighbour, on either coast,
 ‘ Would cry—“ Safer than key and cupboard
 ‘ Is the word of Sampson Hubbard.”
 ‘ Ay! your mother—nay, do not weep,—
 ‘ She strove to kiss me, but sleep,

' A last sleep stole on her—she sigh'd,
 ' Closed her eyes—but with a smile she died—
 ' Now, chuck, keep to the Hubbard tree:
 ' You've given your word—you'll keep it too.
 ' This flash-i'-the-pan—this farmer's son—
 ' If—shiver my timbers, but my gun—
 ' But stuff—your father, Kate, is wrong—
 ' This voyage—this weather—I shall long
 ' To see the beacon on return;
 ' For I get old, Kate, and I' night
 ' Rheumatisms tell me all's not right.'

' Father, you've said enough: why go to sea again?
 ' Whene'er you're absent, I know but of doubt and pain.
 ' As for young Williams—true, there was a time—
 ' But he deceived me: ever praised me in his rhyme
 ' With valentines, till I found he woo'd another:
 ' Then, with tears you know, I told you (for I'd no mother)
 ' That I disdain'd the villain, who, with wily art,
 ' Could ever hope to trifle with a Hubbard's heart.
 ' No! father: you are my comfort—I'm content:
 ' Katharine ever was, and Katharine's your blessing meant.'

Now, Sampson, though in aught else an honest man,
 Will cheat the revenue whene'er he can.
 Young Williams detects him, and would bribe the maid:
 Says, that from his coffers the forfeit shall be paid,
 If she'll yield to her dishonour. ' No!' doth she cry,
 ' Perish the thought! what though my father die
 ' With prison-damps!'—at this she faints—his arms have
 caught
 The senseless maid! and, at this moment, are we taught—

Some are grateful—for't came to light,
 What Sampson's heart had lock'd in night.
 Sampson had saved old Williams once from gaol :
 Old Williams now proclaim'd the conscious tale ;
 And having prosper'd laid down Sampson's fine,
 All in sheer gold with gratitude divine.
 Together now in haste for Hubbard's did they run
 With Sampson's oldest company—his favourite gun.
 Eager he gazed t' embrace his darling Kate,
 But little thought his bliss denied by fate.
 For—his daughter, in young William's arms !
 Rouzes to vengeance, and his brain alarms.
 Too soon, alas ! without reflection, shot—
 Shot to the heart—his life-blood Kate.
 He hears explain'd—but hears too late—!
 On her o'erwhelm'd he sinks to endless rest,
 Forsakes the wrong world but to find the blest.

In an extensive city, venerable for its age and
 sacred architecture, I at this moment recollect an
 incident, the disclosure of which I hope old time
 and gallantry will forgive for this once. A young
 man of handsome address and figure in the com-
 pany, received a billet from an unknown hand,
 boldly confiding to his honour the secret conquest.

of his charms over a heart, till that period its own unrestricted regent: it went on to ascribe all her sufferings to an irresistible attraction in his theatrical merits, and delicately apologizing for the wish of an interview (the corner of a certain street at eight o'clock), and encouraging it by the information that the lady's fortune was handsome and at her own disposal. This was shown to me in confidence for my advice and opinion, the gentleman knowing, that assignations had sometimes been appointed by strangers, and the condemned vanity of one party exposed to the hoax of a hearty horse-laugh by the other. However, after some time spent in contemplation, we gave some credit to it, and I conceived he would be impolite and unfeeling, if not imprudent, in refusing to accede to this innamorato's appointment. The gentleman felt awkward, and desirous to know what he should say. I thought, after the first exchange of blushes, stammerings, and hesitations had passed, a brief but delicate disclosure of his sentiments would be expected; and as the weather was sharp, as he might injure his voice too for the succeeding evening, and the ears of his fair charmer feel less delighted, I proposed some neat little concluding tag of verses. He liked these—

" So bright an eye, so soft an air,
 " Did ever nymph disclose ?
 " The lilly is not half so fair,
 " Nor half so sweet the rose."

But what was his confusion to find an antiquated dame, a toothless Venus, attended with chastest caution by her confidential maid. He terminated the meeting as soon and respectfully as his embarrassment (which she attributed to a return of her *penchant*) would allow. He received letter after letter for many succeeding posts, and at last a valentine with these verses from the poet—

" Can I matchless charms recite ?
 " Source of ever-springing light !
 " Could I count the vernal flow'rs,
 " Count in endless time the hours,
 " Count the countless stars above,
 " Count the captive hearts of love—"

Here when he had read out, I took the liberty of stopping him, and advised an immediate return of the valentine with this impromptu couplet for a final answer :

Count by thyself thy golden store,
 Count o'er thy wrinkles, but of me no more,

This lady I understand has since been successful with another youth : but soon after my disgust for such superannuated degradation of her sex had subsided, the public papers recorded a case of more melancholy error in the murder of her infant by its seduced mother. The occurrence floated on my imagination, and I wrote these lines, to mark my abhorrence of the cruel deed :

THE CRUEL MOTHER.

GAY shone the sun upon Lisetta's toil,
 Nor rose it e'er to greet a lovelier
 Maid ; nor more industrious could there vie
 Within that humble manufacturing sphere,
 Where ladies' lace, th' ingenious device
 Of ornamental thread, delights to boast.
 Shutter nor curtain t'exclude morn's early
 Beam had she ; but to the latticed casement
 Of her chamber, the rosy-breathing hours
 Would hie, and court her welcome with their breeze
 Of health, and every virgin-honest charm :
 And when eve stole, in ebon mantle dight,
 Upon the rapid steeds of blithesome day ;
 Each sprite and fay would quit their secret haunt,
 Whether of honied bell, or hollowed oak,
 To dance in mystic revels o'er the breast
 Of innocence, giving with goss'mer feet
 Tenderest impressions of balsamic sleep,
 Mingled with dreams akin to heav'n alone.
 But, ah !—my muse, with horrible dismay
 And aching heart, must give the bloody tale.

One fatal hour a dæmon of the night
 Prowl'd o'er the earth, disguised, to find his prey.

With usual victims glutted, the monster
 Dainty grew forsooth, and seized this beauteous
 Lamb. Ne'er Jove assumed a more decaiftal
 Shape. 'Twas man's blest form th' hypocrite assumed,
 Man with his pledges of perennial truth,
 Man with his credible appeals to heav'n,
 Man too erect to stoop to brutal views,
 Man who can boast of an immortal soul,
 Man who—! SEDUCER was his name.

And now the volume of all cruel deeds
 Must yield pre-eminence to bolder sin,
 Than by inventive hell's dire brood was e'er
 Conceived before.

A babe, th' unconscious witness of their guilt,
 Ask'd in its cries protection at its birth.
 The mother press'd it to her callous heart—
 That obdurate heart, now petrified with sin.
 Her heart disown'd all but a selfish pride,
 Whispering her *character*; and to hide her
 Crime, hoodwink the world, be herself again,
 Bury in searchless ocean, and live secure
 Herself, free from her happier sex'
 Reproaches. Who'd know? Her paramour had
 F'led—the birth profoundly secret. Who'd know?
 None. So young a thing could scarcely suffer
 Pain. Who'd know—who? again delusion ask'd:
 Till, cheated every sense, the cozening
 Chalice Satan and false reflection lent
 To wash away her shame, swiftly she grasp'd,
 And drank off to the dregs, though conscience nigh
 Would oft have stay'd her hand. Night now favour'd

Her unnatural resolve : with murky screen,
 From all but weeping angels hid, onward
 She pressed, fearful alone that her intent
 Should change. The billows lash'd the cliff; and
 seem'd

To murmur forth sweet nature's voice against
 The cursing crime.—Monster! monster! monster!—
 Hast thou the heart? Oh yes! yes! yes! I see—
 My tortured brain swims round!—the rest, poor
 wretch,
 Is thine to feel.

Fast to thy coral grave, by sea-weed girt,
 Sweet babe, the tender Nereid shall thy corpse
 Adorn with pearls of modest lustre, mild
 As infant innocence;—but thou, mother
 Accursed, on what couch can repose thy keen
 Upbraiding memory? None! I see thee now—
 So soon the conscious poison of thy guilt
 Begins its horror-striking riot through
 Thy mind, whilst all the maniac stands confess'd
 In thy forlorn and miserablest soul.
 Whence came that scream!—'Tis her's—she seeks the
 cliff,

And hoarsely supplicates the lightning's wrath
 T'accelerate her fate. Hark! again she—
 Screams—now rends her hair and laughs anon. I'll
 List.—' They shall not keep him. But how shall I
 ' Know my child? I never watch'd its playful
 ' Eyes, and mark'd how shaped its lip; I never
 ' Traced its pretty locks of hair—nor ever
 ' Courted that inspiring smile that happy
 ' Mothers own a joy beyond expression;

' Fretted pursued its infant steps when grown
 ' Lost danger should—hush ! Who's there ? 'Tis the
 wind,
 ' That brings my baby's cries to stab my heart:
 ' That flash is lightning—ah !—it exposes
 ' To heav'n's enquiring eye the funeral bed—
 ' See ! see ! see ! that foaming wave's my boy's shroud.
 ' How tranquilly the billows have rock'd him
 ' To his sleep ! We'll sleep together—why not,
 ' Ye furies ? Bless me, how loud the thunder !
 ' The welkin's cleft in twain—aperient
 ' Flashes show me my child above, too high
 ' By much for me to soar ; and, oh ! where do
 ' You hurry me, ye ghastly fiends ? My heart
 ' Is broken—sear'd to its very core ! Conscience,
 ' You upbraid in vain ! 'tis too late ! Oh ! that
 ' Pang ! mine eyes are balls of fire, and now they see
 ' My child in bliss ; whilst I—mercy, mercy !
 ' I own it all—I, I had no mercy !
 ' P'm choak'd—give me air—a minute spare me—
 ' Oh but one minute ! No ? 'tis too late—late.
 ' That wave will cool my parching tongue.
 ' 'Tis well ! I go—ha ! ha ! ha !—to the grave
 ' I gave my——.'

This company I soon quitted for the same reason that hundreds had done so—because they could not render themselves sufficiently delighting to the wanton and fickle eye of the manager's wife ; or because she was apprehensive of their sharing too abundantly of her theatrical praise. When I say that this lady is the universal execration of the profession, every actor will know who I mean—she who

“ Dress'd in a little brief authority,
 “ Plays such fantastic tricks before high heav'n,
 “ As make the angels weep.”

We have heard of a Queen Philippa, chastening the severity of an Edward the Third in favour of the condemned at Calais ; and the female character, lovely in itself, can never display itself to greater advantage than when promoting the peace and prosperity of her circle : but here is a histrionic queen, having usurped the authority of her husband, exerts it with more than Russian despotism, and lights the torch of sacrifice from motives more mean, than even the bigotry of that disgrace to her sex, the sanguinary Mary. To this fiend—whose well-known tyranny has thrown many a large family out of employment, where, from their good conduct, they formed a list of

friends (amongst whose endearing services they expected to have happily terminated their days)—to this fiend I could not truckle, cringe, and fawn, nor cry with Hudibrastic cunning,

“ Madam, I do, as is my duty,

“ Honour the shadow of your shoe-tie.”

I changed my situation, where I was a material favourite with the audience, and where the situation might have been profitable, for one in a company, where I had then pleasure to reflect that I had been before, and the cause of my ever having quitted it was removed. Here I composed the following on Contentment.



CONTENTMENT.

' WHAT, goody housewife, age's wrinkled brow
 ' Gives deepen'd furrow to your visage now.
 ' Say what's the cause? Have thieves got in and stole,
 ' Or hunting puss thrown down, your china bowl?

' Neither, good Thomas, neither by this light:
 ' I'm only giving Jane advice that's right.'

' I'll tell you, wife—the best advice when old,
 ' Is good example and to drop the scold.
 ' That clattering tongue will force the wench to roam.
 ' Let youth have pleasure, and endear their home.
 ' Give liberal ear to undisguised youth,
 ' And loyal confidence will tell you truth.
 ' Your child will love you, as she hates deceit:
 ' You'll see her bosom, but detect no cheat.
 ' You'd have the girl mew'd in a chimney-corner,
 ' With nought but soot and ign'rance t' adorn her.
 ' And what crime now? Christmas is come—perchance
 ' Old gaffer Perkins gives a happy dance:
 ' Then let her go and join the merry round—
 ' Not dully listen to the fiddle's sound,
 ' And wish and wish that gen'rous mind
 ' Her honest equals in our neighbour find.
 ' Odso, how featly did we trip away
 ' At many a frolic ere the wedding-day;

' And often to prolong time's running sand
 ' (Your mother absent) back'd her watch's hand.
 ' Your good old dam would gape, and wish us gone—
 ' If it had kill'd her, you'd have danced till morn.
 ' And then the nightingale we never found—
 ' A good excuse to take our evening round,
 ' While chaste Diana smiled upon the fraud,
 ' And conscious love still sued for her reward.
 ' Hymen our lawyer, no settling deeds had we,
 ' Our hearts were captive—though to marry free.
 ' Your mother did not scold, and noise, and fret,
 ' Ner had you learn'd the knack as yet.
 ' I say, why dame?—how strange so long you're quiet!
 ' Ere now my dozen words would cause a riot.'

' There now, sir,—your staff has put me out.'—' What,
 honey?'

' I say be quiet, sir, I'm thinking of my money!'

' Your money! oh! burn the lotteries!—that palf,
 ' That prize, you got—a blaak has made yourself.
 ' While we were poor, our cottage woodbine grew
 ' Not less confined than was the bliss we knew:
 ' With roses mingled, they'd together peep
 ' In Sol's first beams t' upbraid the sluggard sleep:
 ' Gay play'd the zephyr, till it charm'd the sense:
 ' These were our joys till avarice stole them hence.
 ' The hedge of briar and the dappled cow
 ' Have lost their charms upon their mistress now:
 ' She only thinks on cash to give her child,
 ' Her coffers mended but her temper spoil'd.
 ' When poor, the lame and blind partook your bounty:
 ' Now thou'rt the greatest miser in the county.

' Now some few thousands have enrich'd your purse,
 ' Pride will convert your blessings to a curse.
 ' Our homely Jane, bred up to her station,
 ' You'd wish to rank first peeress of the nation,
 ' Quit pigs and fowls, and strive to ape the high—
 ' The jest of every rank—and disappointed die.
 ' True that Jane's virtues might enrich a throne,
 ' But fashionable habits we should leave alone.
 ' Immoderate ambition is the devil's charm:
 ' We humble rustics must attend our farm.
 ' Some honest swain may take our Jane to wife,
 ' And ruddy grandsons grace our latter life,
 ' Cheer the dim twilight of the waning eye,
 ' With home-felt comfort bright'ning ere we die.
 ' In sober village-peace our progeny let live,
 ' Nor court the meteors which delusion give.
 ' Princes and peasants have their rank assign'd—
 ' Each have their duties, each rewards will find.
 ' The patriot-prince may bask in glory's rays,
 ' Contented shepherds count their peaceful days ;
 ' But change the crook, and give the sceptre this,
 ' Pastors and royals would their passage miss :
 ' That would the crook a listless burthen feel,
 ' And both, benighted, their distress reveal.
 ' Then prithee, wife, don't spurn the village-sphere
 ' But seize the happiness that's ever near :
 ' Few cares usurp contentment's placid throne,
 ' Earth we enjoy and heav'n bespeak our own ;
 ' Bright mounts youth's sun, and age's set serene,
 ' With scarce a cloud but which adorns the scene.'

Here I wrote a national interlude to give attraction to my benefit, and ridicule the threats of Bonaparte's invasion of this country, which seemed only to be conducted, for several months about that time, in his visits and revisits to Boulogne. The novelty of personating the celebrated emperor had the desired effect; and notwithstanding my usual fate in professional envy upon such occasions, I had the triumphant satisfaction of applause in my sentiments of national attachment and abhorrence of unscrupulous ambition. This piece, entitled *A Scene at Boulogne, or The Emperor not Easy*, has also been played in other companies, and after my secession.

Here I also wrote and sung the following parody upon "Sally in our Alley."

A PARODY.

1.

LET poets boast of Venus' fame
 And call her beauty's queen-a;
 There lives a nymph, whom I could name,
 Whose type was never seen-a.

Of such a face they never dreamt,
 A form so sweet commanding,
 From ev'ry female fault exempt,
 So blest her understanding.

2.

Let shepherds pipe their oaten songs,
 And Sappho wake her lyre-a,
 No harmony to them belongs
 Like her's whom I admire-a.
 No feats of art engage her voice,
 But nature most expressive :
 E'en choirs of seraphs must rejoice,
 And own her charms excessive.

3.

Let beaux call beauty o'er and o'er
 A rose and lily gay-a,
 My flow'r surpasses them, and more—
 She blossoms every day-a.
 Let queens wear diamonds every night,
 To decorate their beauty ;
 My charmer's eyes shine twice as bright,
 And claim my love and duty.

In another company some time after, to which I had removed for the purpose of amelioration, I found my plainness not suit, and that there were coxcombs of actors, who could please the manager's wife and daughters more by their flattery, than being perfect in their business before the public. I had slaved to accommodate the manager and to forward the business of the theatre, by sometimes sitting up half the night, and sacrificing my health in my exertions, which, having been crowned by the signal applause of the audiences, I did not expect would meet the jealousy of the manager and company; but the despicable ingratitude, that marked the return of Mr. G—h, in bringing another person in the most artful manner to supply my characters, designing to give me inferiors, cannot merit my detestation more than it did the veto of the public, who ordered the name of this gentleman to be taken out of the press (for the part of the Stranger) composing for the bill of the following night, and mine to be substituted. This was done; but I knew that the power of a manager would ultimately render uncomfortable any actor he might dislike, therefore I resolved to make another adventure in quest of fortune's smiles. I was reminded of Mr. Forbes' description (in his Travels) of his annoyance from monkeys, when knowing he could nei,

ther make reprisals, nor expect quarter from the enemy, he judged it prudent to secure a retreat. Some time after I agreed with a manager to teach his sons a little Latin ; and a musician in the company, of most industrious habits and unimpeached respectability, was very desirous also to obtain an insight into that famed and esteemed language. We made a contract, that as I did not like money to pass between us, he should in return teach me the —— What? Nothing less than the fiddle! Some sage musicians laughed at the idea of my beginning an instrument so extremely difficult when arrived at manhood ; but the result showed, that although I obtained not any excellency in the art, yet a little attentive practice, at my leisure hours, gave me some advantage in my profession, which, when declined for one demanding more time and unremitting labour, withdrew its harmonious claims. To the invention of this instrument and my own perseverance, I owed—as I have no doubt (from what I have heard) a certain nobleman, once high in ministerial rank and of consummate talents,* owed—much relief from graver care and assiduities. But my noisy friend, I found, embarrassed my good understanding often with my

* The present Lord L——n.

lodgings; for my leisure hours, for the most part, were unfortunately in the evening, much about that critical time, half after seven or eight, when fairies creep unheard into the "cowslip's bell," and nature, with the wearied housewife, alike require the rest of childish innocence: but my respect for all matrimonial comfort, although at this time a bachelor, was such, as not to create a long delay before I gave the subject due consideration; and the preliminary question, I ever afterwards put to the landlady of any lodgings I wished to view, was—"Pray have you any children?" If replied to in the affirmative—"Good morning, madam: I wish your children a happy night's rest. My fiddle and I are fellow performers, but I have differed about a part, that we have lately alternately played—I in the theatre one night, he at my lodgings the next—I mean Macbeth. We have both "murdered the innocent sleep."

With my favourite I traversed the banks of the Tweed, and in a certain "good town" I have to relate an incident not easily to be forgotten. A handsome square, termed the parade, is tenanted by classes of unequal respectability. A Mr. R——d agreed to occupy a first floor in partnership with myself, messing together and

having a joint sitting-room, whose pleasant and respectable appearance I thought a subject for mutual congratulation. Setting aside a prevailing gaiety of heart in my younger house-mate, and which I feared would lead to the disparagement of his better qualities, our tempers coincided. His leisure evenings were always spent out, mine usually at home with my fiddle, with which I was one night amusing myself, when my young friend came in, and begged to introduce a particular friend, a Capt. Harvey of the navy—rather a *petit* Captain I thought—more like a green midshipman. Alas! a few weeks proved most lamentably, that in the heart of this sparkish visitor (who, to please my friend, had assumed male attire merely to play a hoax upon the steady Mr. Young)—in this heart sat weakly veiled the very canker of female wretchedness. Not like the mute of Blair, who “lets his person by the hour to mimic sorrow, when the heart’s not sad,” she, poor destitute, was urged by penury and her friendless situation, to let her person by the hour, to counterfeit a joyful revelry upon the ruins of a breaking heart. In the period of half an hour’s conversation, the topic turned upon the theatre. ‘You played last night,’ said she, ‘a character rather new in your line of acting; did not you?’ ‘Yes,’ I replied;

‘ the gay frivolous coxcomb is rather out of date
 ‘ with me, having been confined to the serious
 ‘ department since I joined this company; and
 ‘ I was not well with a very bad cough and
 ‘ head-ache. Ours is a teasing profession, when
 ‘ it subjects us to the necessity of assuming the part
 ‘ which we do not feel. I often say with Addison,

“ ‘Tis not my talent to conceal my thoughts,
 “ To carry smiles and sunshine in my face,
 “ When discontent sits heavy at my heart.” ’

To this she stammered out something I could not distinctly comprehend, coloured, and seemed willing to impart what was choked by grief.

“ *Ter conata loqui, ter fletibus ora rigavit.*”*

My poor naval hero, unused, I suppose, to my plain manner, looked abashed and vanquished: her valiant habit was disowned by nature, and she caught the first opportunity of retreat, leaving me and my humble fiddle all the honours of the field. R——d thought it all very odd, adjusted his neck-costume and hair in his usual and

* “ Thrice did she essay to speak,
 “ Thrice bedewed her cheek with tears.”

frequent manner by the glass, and, with his familiar *song froid*, took a hasty leave, only observing—‘ I suppose you do not walk any where ‘ this evening.’ I learned by my friend, and the servant who attended us, the next day, that this female lived as one of the sisterhood, in a public house near at hand, a receptacle for abandoned and seduced wretches, under the providence of a Lady Abbess, more advanced in infamy and years. Her reputable parents lived in an excellent farm, enriched with every comfort to gild their passage down the vale of life, saving the honour of that only child, on whom their dotage hung for twenty happy years. Soon after this, I was awaked one night at that hour,

“ When none but wretches haunt the twilight plains,”

by the dreadful shrieks of this very woman, who was thrust from the door of her iniquitous mistress, and beaten brutally in the dispute (I afterwards learned) by her very sisters in shame, the jealous rivals of each other’s meagre and haggard fortunes. She cried out (and I perceived she was intoxicated) ‘ Murder !’ and for help ! I knew not what to do. Loth to entangle myself in such broils, and fearing I could render her no service, I stood at the window some minutes, in horrible

suspence as to what conduct I should choose, when the conflict ended. The plaintive wretch hobbled away, yelling with most piteous exclamations. I arose early in the morning, and passing the door saw the pavement stained, and absolutely locks of hair clotted with blood. At this spectacle my knees trembled, and my heart sickened. Thrice again, in the space of six weeks, was this scene renewed with the same or less violence; for though the object, it is true, wandered while the night concealed her dishevelled appearance and degraded sex, yet she found reflection sorer; and such was her shame, that she preferred to re-enter this pestilential lazaretto, rather than allow the rising sun to witness the rejection and reproofs, to which the threshold of her more prudent and happy sex might expose her. I begged my landlady to intercede with her parents, whom, she said, she knew well; but that, though they had offered to receive her, and that she abhorred, to very disgust, the life still persisted in, and though she was alive to bitterest compunction for her filial ingratitude, she could find no courage for admitting an idea, which should ever contemplate the sweet picture of her resting again under her parents' roof. She resigned herself an obstinate devotee to the flames of anguish, which disobedience had kindled, but

which all her tears were insufficient to quench. How often since has this feminine wreck returned to my thoughts, in contrast to the dignity preserved in the national character of my fair countrywomen, whether embellished to adorn the patrician assemblies, or more industriously engaged in the domestic guardianship of the peasant's meal, which his honest labour had earned, his unpolluted cottage graced, and the welcoming smiles of wife and children doubly endeared ! The banks of the sweet Tweed, and its amorous celebrity, with my distance from my native residence, suggested these verses on Valentine's day.

TO LUCINDA.

THE gay smiling rose is no emblem of love—
 'Tis the counterfeit's value it bears:
 True affection's a blossom perennial shall prove,
 Whilst to heaven her fragrance she bears.

No leaf of my love for Lucinda shall fall,
 Nor my autumn of life e'er blow cold:
 Dear remembrance of her must a fervour recal,
 Though as winter my days should wax old.

The breast that's sincere summer's warmth shall impart,
 Every sigh of fond absence shall glow,
 To nourish the root of the sensitive heart,
 And less changed than the evergreen grow.

When in ruins the leaves of the rose shall be shorn,
 Every thorn will remain in its place;
 But should blossoms of youth by age be all torn,
 Truth's ivy shall hallow the space.

" Cold blew the wind in Aberdeen streets,"
 when the knell of death for Charlotte Mearns, a
 young lady in the company of about sixteen, smote
 my meditations with unfeigned compassion for
 her disconsolate father, together with regret for
 the general loss which the company and society
 endured, in the absence of her cheerful disposition
 and other exemplary virtues. At her father's re-
 quest I wrote this epitaph :

EPITAPH.

PEACE to thy virgin-shade! Kind nymph, adieu,
 Thou sweetest flow'r that all our garden grew !
 In sad responses to the blast of death,
 Thy florist sob'd with scarce surviving breath.
 His parent-hopes, last prop of life, all gone !
 Thy proudest monument, he lives forlorn.

Hither, gay youth, and here suspend awhile .
 Thy active footsteps and incautious smile,
 Here to record and imitate the worth,
 That graced a death, of real woe the birth :
 This done, renew the dance with active nerve,
 For Charlotte's mem'ry must your safeguard prove.

The manager of a company I joined in the north was of French extraction ; and had resigned his commission in the army, where he had been engaged in the recruiting-service, to beat for volunteers to his *corps dramatique* : and though a recruit seldom obtained any bounty on joining his standard, after a long march ; yet if he wished to revoke his warlike connexion, this captain was master enough of his business, not to let him escape without his smart-money.

A poor woman, who had been strolling with a little band of Thespians ; and who had lost her only friend in her brother (a brewer, who had been recently scalded to death in his vat), had a child, who, with the rage of the day, stood forward as a young *Roscus*. The child was engaged for a few nights, and had a benefit. It was in the neighbourhood where the female's loss took place ; and from pity of her distress, more than the child's merit, agreed to make her a good benefit. The manager would not abate his usual heavy charges for the expence of the house ; and his wife, in his absence, being to settle the account with this poor woman's friend who was security for the benefit-charges, her sordid inhumanity did not permit her to mitigate even the inferior expences of the stage ; and when she read

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‘ A supper for the Sultan,’ the gentleman observed, ‘ What, ma’am, do you charge this poor woman with the supper you ate yourself as Roxalana ?’

Adherence to truth in this *Commandant François* I could not doubt after the following display. The painter was one day sketching the outlines of a Turkish scene for Blue Beard. ‘ By —, you must be very particular, Mr. R——d, in not drawing your dwellings heavy. I remember once I came wid my conquering army, and breakfasted at an inn ; and I did march up the country a few miles, but returned wid my conquering army to dinner : when so far from the cloth being laid, I could not see the house ; but soon, to my great astonishment, I learned, dat one of de winds common to dat country had removed the house a couple of miles. So wid my conquering army, by —, I did march in search of my dinner, and eat very heartily for my additional exercise.’

This benevolent foreigner wished to make me his acting manager, and to supplant a Mr. M——s of a situation, he very creditably supplied ; but my plain understanding was rather doubtful of his intriguing, recruiting genius, as-

sisted as it was by his luxuriant flights of eastern imagery. I therefore preferred to venture with a blunt British tar in his vessel bound for England; yet not without some pleasing gratification at having seen much on the Scottish shores to admire. At Aberdeen I wrote the following verses, in a lodging where a beautiful canary-bird of my landlady was caged; and who, recreated whilst in his confinement by the noise of my violin, seemed to esteem my presence with no little pleasure, and with shrill ecstasy would,

“ Break the bands of sleep asunder,”

when he judged it time for me to rise in the morning.



GENERAL SYMPATHY.

WHILE loftier muses sing of Afric's wrongs,
 Or man for man alone compassion boasts,
 Mine be this humbler task to own a sigh
 For all creation, and all nature's wounds :
 To 'waft the various cruelties of man
 On those, not blessed with souls religious found,
 With vast extensive reason unendow'd,
 Yet form'd with art beyond the skill of man,
 Brutes graced with instinct more than we can give.
 To say when beast, bird, reptile, insect, and
 Fair creation's numerous train bend 'neath the
 Lash of those, more wanton than fantastic
 Apes, were cruelty of mine to such, the
 Few excepted, whose trembling sympathy
 May now perchance have snatch'd a respite from
 The shrine of pity, to bathe her gaping wound.
 No ! I will but instance what will surely
 Swell to laughter the thriving sides of him,
 Who little cares how others' vessels toss
 So he in fortune's harbour safe repose,
 Free from the hostile sands, the rocks, the winds
 His neighbour's voyage may know : for there are
 Whose cruel steps will hurry to the cliff,
 What time the elements shall madd'ning rave
 And horrid lightnings might an atheist
 Shake, to rob, not aid, the drowning wretch.

Thanks not he how sinners unprepared must
 Past expression feel, thus hurried to account
 Above for talents giv'n and product ask'd.
 Upon the pinion of the trifling bird—
 Not higher will I mount my humble soar.
 E'en now, sweet songster, in his niggard cage
 Charms he the spoiler of his freedom,
 Clime and home; gives an harmonious lesson
 To's jarring foes—forgiveness and content.
 I, pretty warbler, thank thee for those notes,
 And fain would press thee to this injured heart,
 Where I have clasp'd less grateful hearts than thine;
 For do I nod to thee with mimic chirp,
 Thou ratest the deed a sovereign boon.

If thou canst gratulate the rising sun,
 Courting his beams with freshest matin song;
 If thou, purloin'd of every other right,
 So artless pour the grateful lay,
 And happier sleep within thy scantied sphere,
 Than oft, beneath the swelling palace-dome,
 E'en virtuous kings and beauteous queens repose:
 Each morning, listening, will I ne'er forget
 To make forgiveness and content my task.
 Content you prove the height of earthly bliss,
 And happiest refuge from corroding care:
 Forgiveness of injustice pays itself
 From the rich fountain of a cheerful heart.

At the request of a lady, who had been deprived of her parents' offices when young, and owed her education and happiness to the bounty of a kind protectress, these verses were indited on the concluding year.

TERMINATING YEAR.

By me unmark'd not is thy fleet career,
 O time! still trampling o'er the rich and poor:
 I trace thy havoc thro' the waning year,
 Nor hold my tenure of a minute sure.

Yet ere thy scythe has swept its annual mow,
 Or ere the doom of millions I may share,
 While yet this breast with faithful mem'ry glow,
 Let me but tender for my friend a pray'r.

No common friend was she, my friend in youth,
 Whose smile auspicious honoured as it blest;
 Proud of whose company, I breathed her truth,
 My earliest impulse and my latest rest.

Yes, divided time! Oh! seek the tyrant's dome,
 Search out the miser or the spendthrift's gloe,
 Crop every pleasure that delights to roam,
 But leave my friend to gratitude and me.

By this age of my life and period of theatrical pursuits, I had enjoyed the gratification of my professional vanity in finding, that whenever I was cast characters of value, I was esteemed as much (I believe) at least as any predecessor, invited to the first families' parties, my benefits overflowing, compliments paid me on the back of my benefit-tickets, in anonymous letters, &c.; but when I spurned the idea of retaining these ascendancies at the expence of any mean submissions to the tyranny or envy of a manager, I was sometimes necessitated, in the next company, to take the lowest characters, when, notwithstanding every endeavour to equally discharge my duty, I felt the beams of public favour shorn, with this convincing fact, that upon the stage, as in life at large, the man, who has a great character to put forth his genius and abilities, will shine, while he, who has no such opportunity of discovering his merits, is doomed to a

freezing, petrifying indifference : but of all the mortifications, which a sensitive man of good principles—a man perhaps of prudence, education, accomplishments, and gentlemanly behaviour—a man who would detest the idea of defrauding his neighbour, either of his money, his reputation, wife, child, or servant—can endure is, that strong antipathy and aversion (among many of the best people) to his profession. I have the pleasure to reflect with cordial satisfaction on many attentions, which have appeared to give me a precedency before even my superiors; as marks of courtesy to a stranger, and as a sacrifice, on their part, to the wish of convincing me of their unrestrained hospitality : yet knowing the dislike that still would generally prevail, I ever felt aversion myself to form connections with one part of a family, which might meet the disapprobation of the rest on account of my profession only ; and “ I felt myself a sort of odd card, “ shuffled out of the pack by accident, rejected “ by its own suit and not allowed to pair with “ that of any other.”

The excellent performance of Belvidera, and recitation of Collins's Ode at the Berwick Theatre by Miss Smith (now Mrs. Barclay), of Drury-lane Theatre, afforded me as much grati-

fication, as the celebrated Cooke, about the same time, gave me regret, to find him so far lost to his professional dignity and duty as even to forget the scales in Shylock. Yet here was an incident for contemplation. Mr. Cooke, if not applauded this evening, passed without the usual signs of disapprobation: a few evenings after, Mr. Eyre (lately of Drury-lane and the Edinburgh Theatres) felt himself so insulted, and indeed was so distressed, at the imperfectness of an actor, owing to his inebriety, that at last finding it difficult to finish a scene with him, his complaint to the audience was answered by their most unqualified resentment.

My muse missed the talents of Miss Smith on her return to town, and owned it in these lines.

ON MISS SMITH,
NOW MRS. BARROW,
HER PERFORMANCE OF BELVIDERA.

WHILE yet the mellow'd chords resound
 Which Smith of late refined,
 Say, can an equal muse be found
 T'express the raptured mind.

O lovely, tender, powerful sprite!
 Magic with thee is fled:
 Thy passion'd lyre awoke the night,
 Thy genius sunshine spread.

Sweet comment of the tender bard,
 So winning is thine art,
 It might the traitor's fear discard,
 Might melt his monarch's heart.

Soon after a case of seduction occasioned Poor
 Mary.

POOR MARY.

Young Colin, ah! loved with sincerity's soul:

But for Mary, his heart had ne'er known a want:
She saw true affection, yet could not controul
Ambition's regret, that his means were so scant.

Gay Sparkish, now hunting, the maid chanced to meet,
All healthy and fresh as the then smiling morn:
Full astonish'd he pass'd such beauty to greet,
Though restive his steed strove to follow the horn:

But luckless the maid, who for wealth only sighs:
'Tis true, he pledged faith with a damsel so poor.
Her heart, with his oaths, now broken, she dies,
Forsaken and poorer than ever before.

I returned for the third time to the county of Norfolk, where having passed the greatest space of time, I have had more accurate opportunities of estimating its value than that of other counties: and no record of my having spent a portion of my existence on the stage, no blemish in this publication, nothing ridiculous, no ana-

tomy of a northern review, no severity of a *ci-devant* friend's criticism on this book, huddled together in the confusion of distress, could ever entail so keen a rebuke, as not to pause one minute to pay this county some tribute, though a small one, of deserved commendation and gratitude. In so doing, there is no flattery; and the very least I can say is, that either as the nursery of patriots, or the asylum of religious charity, the temple of art and science, or the soil of agriculture, this county is nobly eminent. Many, many years may the leading characters live to bless their fellow-countrymen; but never force me from the tombs of Nelson, Windham, or Cowper, or from the grave of my at least generous friend W. M. H***l of Wa**r***n, to pay them the like last and melancholy tokens of my unfeigned veneration. There are names that my tongue—but I will not—it is unnecessary.

I remember an impromptu I made once during the war—this my muse demands.

If I think but of B——t, I forget Rome and Greece;
 ‘Do you mean the war-minister?’ ‘No, the minister of
 ‘peace.’

And also another, a short time since, on Mr. Coke's being shot by accident:

Thou art licenced, no doubt, to shoot; but, sportsman,
look—

None was e'er yet qualified to make game of Cocks.

In my travels I reflected on the various scenes
I witnessed, and composed the following on Happiness.

ON HAPPINESS.

TELL me the path, thou Genius of the Blest,
Where my stray steps may find a welcome rest.

Not in the haunts of fashion's midnight maze,
Where rival affectation throbs for praise :
Not in the perfumed and the crowded ball,
Whose heat and period scorn Hygeia's call :
Not where the cheek, of late sweet beauty's throne,
Usurp'd by languor and its monarch flown ;
Where coral lip, arch'd brow, and brilliant eye,
Suitors' or artists' flattery would defy,
Yet now enerv'd, shrouded in sickly hue,
Look but the epitaph of life they knew ;
Whose jaded spirit tremulously asks
Th' unequal substitute of paint or masks,
To mimic pleasure on the brink of death,
And court vivacity with asthma breath.

*I see the maypole rear its urn,
And from the timeless sacrifice I turn.*

I woo some lawn, what time the fresh'ning breeze
Invites the kins to quit the shelt'ring trees.
The sun-burnt sickleman and nymph so coy,
Blushing to own themselves each other's joy,
Adorn the circle of the rustic band,
Whose maypole, meant for many years to stand,
Centres a present, as its future bliss,
Where pride nor robs, nor humble hopes can miss.
The decent costume and the hearty jest,
The modest virgin and the husband blest,
The aged with locks alone by time wax'd grey,
The tott'ring babe, who'd strive to dance as they,
Perchance denied, displays the only face
For discontent to mar the jocund place,
Where gen'rous exercise, in ambient air,
Brightens the temper from the rust of care:
The drunken jargon and traducing tale
Ne'er yet descended to this honest vale.
How blest the pastor of this peaceful sphere,
Cam's senate left, to add an honour here!
How lovely mothers, who this while repose,
With infant buds environing the rose!

On my return to this county, I passed the church-yard of Beccles, where lie the remains of a manager and his wife, with whom living I had several altercations: I measured with my eye, again and again, the length of their tomb, till a tear of compunction for human enmities washed away the remembrance of any but their good qualities: and not long after, in another last retreat, had I the pain to behold the spot, where death once more convinced me of the insecurity of life, even though adorned with youth, beauty, and innocence—whose worth must have been a parent's pride, her company an honour to her youthful sex. But what! in so short an absence? Her mother too! These were the wife and daughter of a copartner manager with those, I had left in Beccles' grave. Four in so brief a span!

Amongst the two exhibitions of paintings at Norwich the last Assize-week, and surrounded by specimens of talent which honour the kingdom, was the subject of a lady presenting a bible to a cottager's wife, by Clover. I felt enraptured at this interesting piece: I walked round the room again and again; and when my time was expired for this treat, and once more to that

“ ————— I flew,

“ Celestial knowledge shone in ev'ry view,”

I wrote these lines ; and though an anachronism
in point of date (being only last summer), I think
it best to introduce them here.

TO MR. CLOVER.

Clover, the subject emulates thy art,
Felicitates the sight, and joys the heart.
Your heroine all my captive sense hath charm'd
Her sex exalted, fashion's pride disarm'd ;
Where doubtful penitence assured may trace
The heav'nly promise in her angel face :
Her eyes enthroning every chasten'd ray,
T' encourage ignorance and sin to pray ;
Her lips the heralds of the sov'reign truth,
That cheers the aged and that warms the youth,
Beauty indeed 'tis here the cot befriends,
As grace celestial every step attends ;
The word of God accompanies each look,
Which seals with sweetness as she gives the book.
More than the good Samaritan she cheers,
Who less the body than the soul endears :
'Tis not th' affected uplift eye she turns,
Nor the " rapt seraph" who impassion'd burns ;
But gentlest accents, soft as Herman's dew,
Persuade us most that what she says is true.

The cottaged wife too, in her staid, imparts
 Expressive nature clear of fictitious arts.
 The *four ensemble* you've so shrewdly fixt,
 Our pleasure's perfect and our praise unmixt.

Awakening nature, in a tuneful February, lost
 awhile the remembrance of winter.

VALENTINE.

Ye chaste rustic nymphs, who lead the gay dance,
 Who with garlands embalm ev'ry gale,
 With most modest flow'rs a boon I'd enhance,
 And ye know where they're hid in the vale.

Ah twine me a chaplet of delicate hue,
 Where some innocent bud will impart
 The germ of affection, fresh-op'ning and true,
 Just sprung from the pulse of this heart.

Haste, ye generous fair, unconscious of shame,
 The slack bondage to tender Lavinia the kind:
 Be there one blossom eke may blush for my flame,
 But none lost, Hymen happily bind.

Bagatelles like this and the following would amuse my odd half-hours, in rainy weather, dinner not ready, or in relief from weightier charges.

MY MADRIGAL.

O SHEPHERDS, give o'er the gay strain,
My Daphne can hear you no more !
My Daphne, the pride of the plain,
Whose loss surely all will deplore.

My Daphne to all was so kind,
Tho' so fair and to me the most true ;
Her sex ner my own cannot find
A heart, but her death-bell must rue.

Did ever your flocks come to harm ?
Did ever a lover forsake ?
Did death e'er the orphan alarm
Your grief would not Daphne partake ?

Did swains about trifles e'er jar ?
Did lovers unjustly accuse ?
Was she who would reconcile far,
Or share in your troubles refuse ?

On sabbaths, when village-bells rung,
 Clean and modest my Daphne was drest :
 At church the response of her tongue
 A respect for religion confest:

O Daphne, the cheer of the plain,
 Which your absence did ever deplore,
 When shall merriment visit again ?
 My Daphne can glad you no more.

I see, brother shepherds, the tear
 Restrain'd will soon copiously flow :
 For me, I must haste to my dear,
 Kiss once more the loved cause of my woe.

At an inn, called Tidd Goat, separated by
 the counties of Cambridge and Norfolk (and
 where, I believe, I slept in those two counties
 at the same time, the feet of my bed in one and
 the head standing in the other) I composed the
 following, whilst resting on a journey.

G A M B L I N G.

WITH Arthur, peace forsook his babe and fair,
 His lure but dice, dishonour, and despair.
 A husband fled, his tender place supplies
 A widow's anguish and an orphan's cries.
 Inhuman wretch ! But whither fled ? None know,
 And but a few enquire the mother's woe.
 His debtors' loud much more than pity's moan,
 She, crazy vagrant, with her child has flown.
 And now far distant from her once-loved home,
 O'er brake and moor see hapless Emma roam :
 See thick'ning skies seem mourning for her grief,
 But hideous thunders are her sole relief.
 Her famish'd charge, too, vivid lightnings scare;
 Phrenzy and screams her fainting frame impair.
 Her cries are heard. By whom ? A needy outcast,
 More cruel than the storm, all hope to blast.
 The ruffian weapon calls for all her wealth—
 A treasured infant's all, now found by stealth.
 Balk'd of his booty, stern he stalks away,
 But lightnings meet him, and he starts astray ;
 When dawn, it haps, directs his downward eye,
 To view his wife and child with famine die.
 O'er their wept forms, remorse now shudders, raves,
 And the rash gamester all the future braves.
 Headlong the pistol rends the tortured brain,
 And elsewhere seeks what here he sought in vain.

In the welfare that accompanied me, I ever found a sort of check, when growing very prosperous, which leads me to think, that should hope ever point to any material eminence, like Dean Swift's lady, "I shall be out of breath before I get to the top of it." Still, however, the indulgence of theatrical vanity attended me (and the gratification of most worldly pursuits is that of vanity), though it is but justice to say that I ever laboured hard to earn it, and disdained any pleasure or pride at the cost of another's sufferings. In a celebrated bathing-place I had once a strong disposition to know, besides the applause which was showered down upon me, the fuller and private opinion of what respectable individuals I could. To this end, I wrote upon the seats and railing leading down a cliff, and where verses with other inscriptions had been pencilled, these words—'What do you think of Mr. Y. the actor.' The next day answered in several hands with the most agreeable and bewitching dialect; yet vanity, like some first-rate beauties, expects every urn to pour out its nectared adoration, and, not content, I even ventured to ask opinion respecting other performers. Notwithstanding, all this delight led to no opulence; and I was wont to address the notes which my benefits counted, with Shakspeare to his ghosts—

"Come like shadows, so depart."

Some of the profession, I observed, did manage (though not a very easy thing generally) to quit the stage for some other pursuit : a desideratum long since my own, though finances, or the doubt of success; a long time discouraged the attempt. There had been, certainly, actors more fortunate, or who pursued means I could not to obtain property; and I have seen a theatrical ruler, like "Sylla, having laid down the dictatorship, "live a private senator with perfect security in "that city, where he had exercised the most "bloody tyranny." To escape the stage, school-keeping offered to my conceptions the only opening of respectability, and I resolved to watch the favouring opportunity.

I wrote the following, after studying the character of a lover for a new play, meaning to preserve the amorous mania.



CHARITABLE ELLEN.

O ELLEN, dear Ellen, how graceful thy gait !
 O Ellen, dear Ellen, expression's thy face !
 But these, my dear Ellen, as satellites wait,
 To borrow a lustre from virtue's bright grace.

From mountains and vales how active you bound :
 Compared to your step, lags the hart all so fleet !
 Your voice cheers the swain more than horn cheers the hound ;
 For the accents of charity echo thy feet.

Oh stay, gentle Ellen, and list to my plaint !
 Oh never was heart, Ellen, troubled as mine !
 Compassionate alms would I beg of a saint,
 Might a pensioner live on the smiles that are thine.

I now began more intently than ever to contemplate with pity genuine, that wandering, sauntering, idle fellow, the bachelor : ' What do you do here upon earth,' cried I, ' staring and ogling at other men's wives and children ? What

R

'right have you to find fault with the breaches
 'of matrimonial constancy, who have set but a
 'negative example of virtue yourself? By what
 'authority do you blame the wrong breeding of
 'this man's children, when you produce no pat-
 'tern for their imitation? It is infamous. You
 'admire the pretty women—a very virtuoso in
 'female ascendencies and valentine rhodomonte-
 'tade—and yet dare not confide in any! Oh,
 'for shame! get thee a wife, Charles Bennett,
 'and do better for the *future*. Thou art launched
 'upon an ocean subject to storm, your owner has
 'pointed out your destination, but neglect has
 'made you miss your reckoning: you are out of
 'your proper latitude, sailing without compass
 'or chart, and cannot expect to reach the proud-
 'est port of human felicity.'

Nettled with this rebuke, I looked boldly
 around me, "brushed my hat i' mornings," won
 a mate from the Norfolk coast, nestled on the
 wave, am surrounded with a brood of lovely plu-
 mage; and though the sky may lower, and the
 damps of adversity may chill for the present, yet
 together will we cower, close as the down near-
 est to the heart, and thus encircled never envy
 nor fear the proud eagle, though, from his rocky
 height, his piercing eye may look down on our

danger; for hope will warm my heart, and industry strengthen my pinion.

The ensuing epigram I wrote upon a jocular and impudent fellow, who was a manager, and complained of another manager behaving like a *bear* to his company:

The actors of Sidon and Tyre
 May steer by a cynosure small:
 My near sight, as Grecians require,
 Looks up to a *bear* that is tall.

This person's figure was not fitly adapted for an actor, unless in the character of a bully, or some part of corporeal extravagance. In the Uncle of George Barnwell, during his dying scene, surrounded with fears of his massy weight sustaining some hurt by too precipitate a fall, and rolling his broad orbs of vision to choose the easiest spot to drop, often have his illiberal criticisms brought to my retaliating memory these lines of Pope:

“ As when a dab-chick waddles thro’ the copse,
 “ On feet and wings, and flies, and wades, and hops;
 “ So lab’ring on with shoulders, hands, and head,
 “ Wide as a windmill all his figure’s spread.”

I detest to the extreme ill nature in any shape ; but an agent, who labours hard to reflect credit on his chief, might be spared ingratitude and injury.

After a short lapse of time, I wrote the following.



VICISSITUDE,

A DREAM.

EXORDIUM:

THE myriad host of heaven's brilliant height,
 Seem'd each to typify a day-spring's light,
 When darkling care no more with sullen mien,
 Lends night the horrors of some hell-born scene ;
 When flatt'ry's amulet a treacherous spell
 Appears, to point despair ; and screaming tell
 The withering tale of all our blasted peace—
 Sweet hope her grave, and not the soul's release.
 The radiant spheres illumed my leaden gaze,
 Faith cheer'd my breast, and grief was lost in praise:
 Oh ! 'twas a night, when, had not previous thought
 Wearied my senses, nor refreshment sought
 Upon the tranquil wing of sleep, perforce I'd gazed,
 Rapt in conception, and yet still amazed
 Anon and ere, till pitying twilight stole
 To smooth the change, and ease the lab'ring soul.
 To learning's happier sons I left this glorious theme,
 Explored my couch, but found this wanton dream.

DREAM.

SPRING's earliest flow'r and vi'let fragrance knew
 Methought, where love and childhood grew.
 With new-cull'd blossoms, babes perfumed my way,
 Wherever bent, and taught me ne'er to stray.
 Their merry notes I heard the vales among,
 Winning me homewards from the city throng,
 The trusty guardian of some fav'rite toy,
 My pocket burden'd only with my joy.
 The glowing print eve's farewell kisses lent,
 Were safe mementos of my blessing meant :
 Or could these miss their supplicating end,
 Their sleep-clad smiles might gain an angel-friend.
 My prudent housewife shared our valued health,
 Join'd my thanksgiving, but we pray'd not wealth.
 ' How blest !—divinely blest !' full grateful I exclaim'd—
 When on a sudden roar'd a blast untamed :
 The mountain-torrents well nigh swept my vines,
 My cottage totter'd, whilst pealing thunder
 Threaten'd to sever ev'ry bliss asunder.
 My fav'rite plants, I'd rear'd with fondest care,
 And children-garden, floated in despair.
 A wretched outcast fainted at my door—
 Mine and myself I ceased to think of more,
 But hasten'd to relieve this neighbour,
 Trusting heav'n certes would bless my labour.
 He warm'd him at my hearth, and I awhile
 Forgot the storm, and cheer'd him to a smile.
 Him did I treat, courted as a brother :
 Ingratitude convinced me he was other.

My ears yet deafen'd with the recent storm,
 Whose speils lay prostrate in misshapen form;
 My eye-balls, straining somewhere hope to see,
 Met scarce a fragment left for mine or me.
 From earth to heav'n my languid glance upraised,
 I felt a comfort, and its mercy praised;
 But, ah! deceptive fortune, prone to tease,
 To cheer or kill me with thy fickle breeze,
 Still dost thou mock me with transporting smiles,
 My flagging pulse but quickening with thy wiles.
 The bleeding heart, which late thy pity bound,
 Has—strange to tell!—a sharper dagger found.

The clouds, which sever'd to emit a ray,
 Then join'd in grim and horrible array,
 Till frantic fancy raged on ebon wing,
 Descried death's cave, yet shudder'd at its king,
 The yawning earth a sick'ning sense convey'd,
 And cramb'ling Andes were a level laid.
 The boisterous ocean shifted, and its wealth
 Lay bare, exposed to miserly and thrifty stealth;
 But now return'd and swallow'd up the slave,
 Burying his av'rice in its anger'd wave:
 Yet on his sins 'twas transient thought—my own
 Astounded! On either side echoed a groan
 Alternate, that various crimes confess'd:
 From some, whose guilt the world had never guess'd;
 From most, whose voice hearse horror quite confus'd,
 And darkling chaos not a face perus'd;
 Each heard of sins, whose penitent, conceal'd,
 To fellow-wretches, yet unknown, reveal'd.
 Such the alarm my panting spirits caught,
 Attention by succeeding wonder fraught,

That vivid mem'ry all degraded rush'd,
 And shriek'd the chasm for which nature blush'd.
 Where were my wife and children dear,
 Who cling to my knees and aching breast for fear?
 The valued brother, and an aged sire?
 Have they escaped the ruthless tempest's ire?

On this a genius of the light was seen,
 Gliding thro' ether with benignant mien,
 And soon arrived to certify the death
 Of him, alas! I owed my vital breath.
 ' Thy parent sigh'd his last sad mortal plaint,
 ' Ere this storm rose, or he, translated saint,
 ' Accepted was of choirs, whose seraph grief
 ' Kenn'd ages suff'rings and vouchsafed relief.'
 I would have ask'd—but with a sign forbad
 He, departing with bright'ning radiance clad.
 ' Oh! ' I exclaim'd, ' and is he gone at last!
 ' My woes not measured—his, thank heav'n, are past.
 ' I have no flow'rs: the blast has piecemeal rent
 ' Them all. Else at his tomb in homage bent,
 ' Transplanted would I set the blooming sweets,
 ' As tend'rest tokens from a heart, that beats
 ' With filial adoration of his name,
 ' Sobbing to yield it an affection'd fame.

Now glow'd the bow of heav'n in liveliest hue,
 Woke torpid hope, tho' ruin stood in view,
 Tho' all the vineyard-product of my toil
 And e'en my cot lay scattered with the soil,
 Tho' now my abject fortunes wretched lay,
 Tho' giant-famine stalk'd in dread array;
 My vagrant babes I clasp'd, and hoped a better day.

Here fairied sleep her inconsistent reign
 Bounded with magic stride to Afric's plain,
 And cruel fancy lit her brandish'd torch,
 Whilst ev'ry sand convey'd its sep'rate scorch.
 The helpless partners of my bankrupt fate
 Follow'd my steps, thro' cheerless wastes, till late;
 And when relenting day his triumph closed,
 No solace night in pity interposed.
 What time the moon had spread her silv'ry veil,
 To shroud the corpse-like havock of the gale;
 What time my little ones, with limping tread,
 Felt nature succourless, and droop'd the head;
 What time the roaring lion broke their sleep
 On parent-bosoms, which couldn't choose but weep:
 In quest of some abode, some happier spot,
 A den we found, whose hunger'd tenant's lot
 Was, as we saw, to snuff the drowning flood,
 And, for devouring, miss their victim's blood:
 Frightful even in death, they grinning lay,
 And look'd, at night, their ghosts in sight of prey.
 No cubs were left: the monarch-beasts, we knew,
 Their empire canton'd, no state owning two.
 Fast by their charnel-cell did ebbing wave
 Its atom'd wrecks for shelvy relics lave.
 Safe and sequester'd here, did we our woes,
 Pillow'd by moss, o'er skeletons repose.

When morning-light had chaced, methought, my rest,
 Aside I gazed, and was my aching breast
 Doom'd to own the remnant of my brother!
 Tho' smear'd, I knew't by semblance tow'rd our mother.
 His face the gluttred tyrant had not maw'd—
 Perchance the hurricane the monster awed.

' What ! have I,lost, I cried, ' the only friend,
 ' Who, I could count, would piteously attend
 ' The story of my grief, did he the storm 'scape,
 ' And meet me smiling in affection's shape.
 ' But thus to lose and thus to meet my kin,
 ' My last hope finish where it should begin,
 ' Is torment greater than the rest I knew.'
 Egyptian plagues in legion rapid flew,
 Lizard and vermin smote my smarting view :
 I wept—I raved—and thrice essay'd to go;
 But, as Ixion fixt, all sense revolved with woe.



In seceding from the stage, I trust I may enjoy the proud reflection, that I had made, or at least always strove to make, the respectability of my occupation my own—that I have endured many personal sacrifices to attain this object, and can challenge my contemporaries to deny it. In making this appeal, I indulge a hope of satisfying other ranks, where disapprobation of the stage may, from kindness to me or respect to my family, lead them generously to lament no immaterial portion of my history. Should such regret exist, it may likewise be some qualification, that, although the impediments of adversity have checked the career of my wishes, my power can extend its appeal for the credit of good intentions, from St. Paul's school to the present date; and I cannot resist the impulse of a heart, solicitous for the reputation of my own family, than to address its eldest and much-loved member, whilst he carries back his memory to earliest occurrences, in this language:—As a witness to the leading incidents, which, in your knowledge, have involved my character, have I exhibited a careless disregard to the principles of morality? I appeal to your boyhood—not your boyhood, to your youth—not your youth, to your manhood: I appeal to your pity—not your pity, to your justice: I appeal to the professed friend—not the professed

friend, to the brother—not the brother, to the impartial citizen.

Now bursts a new era upon my history. A pursuit was embraced; which I persuaded myself would be liable to no prejudice—school-keeping; but here, alas! was I egregiously mistaken. As the actor had been ranked but the mere administrator to public pleasure, the schoolmaster was now valued by many only as the servant to their children, and the pecuniary dependant of their pride and caprice. Some certainly seemed to think education a point of the first importance, and that the faithful professor could have claims on the respect with which they honoured me: and although I have heard of the school-empiric, displaying his depths of knowledge to the ignorant or inebriated, in the temple of the country ale-house,

“ ——— Who gazed, and still the wonder grew,
“ How one small head could carry all he knew;”

I have also known the size of premises, the quality of furniture, the state of finance, efforts at extreme gentility, nay a well-stocked cellar, and the puff direct, alone decide some knowing ones in their academical choice and recommendation. It

would betray greater vanity than I have already suffered to escape, could I suppose, that when long-famed authors have commended the instructors of youth to reverence, and failed in so many instances, that my humble pen could succeed. No: yet I must ever lament, that the tutor of youth, and especially of the early stages of learning, like the writer of dictionaries, should only be considered by many, as Dr. Johnson says, "the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the path, through which learning and genius press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress." This being the state of frequent notions, that gentleman, who will conscientiously work well-funded riches for the minds of the rising generation, must anticipate for his repletest remuneration the knowledge of having lived not in vain, but to bequeath at his death that moral and useful legacy. I am aware that my sentiment may suggest the remark, that this professor undertakes the care of youth for his maintenance, and that the public have liberally encouraged his interests. I reply, that to a man of education there are many other pursuits open, if not more profitable, at least less laborious, less precarious, less exposed to the cavil of various

tempers, whims, pride, and folly ; that the liberal support, which provides food, raiment, and lodging for an uncertain duration of time, meets a more than equivalent, where the everlasting happiness of a man's child, in this world and the next, is much insured by the early principles of careful husbandry.

In a sweet sequestered village, the nightingale seemed to address my humble muse for an effort; and after the fatigue of scholastic exercise, a little relaxation was acceptable.

ON MATILDA AND ABSENCE.

LAY still, flutt'ring heart, for Matilda, ere long,
 Shall bring thee a heart full as true ;
 Her presence shall gladden each note of my song,
 And call the fond passion she grew.

Be hush'd stormy sighs, like young Zephyr in May:
 Oh ! her virtues shall chasten thy rage,
 Shall soften this tumult to love's gentlest lay,
 And angel-like pity engage.

Be closed, doating eyes, and give thee to sleep :
 Dreams lend thee her image more clear,
 When the little rogue Cupid his revels shall keep,
 And make thee forget ev'ry tear.

Why glows still the blush? I mean her no harm!
 To honour my vows are fast bound.
 Oh! perish the thought, which could rifle the charm,
 That's ever in innocence found!

And since this imitation of the lover's strains,
 the felicitous event of the Princess Charlotte's
 Marriage, has supplied my muse with a nobler
 object for adoration.

EPITHALAMIUM

ON THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE'S MARRIAGE.

RECITATIVE FRAGMENT.

AGHAST and shudd'ring, I can gaze no more!
 This aching brain no further shall explore,
 Terrific Waterloo, thy heart-appalling plains,
 But court the antidote of happier strains.

ODE.

Hark ! the merry, merry peals,
 Cebourg and hail thee each reveals.
 See the jocund hours advance,
 Mirth and beauty court the dance.
 Mark you not a sov'reign grace,
 Peerless throned in Charlotte's face ?
 Hymen vouchsafes his cordial balm,
 The plighted incense of perennial charm.

Bland the frolic zephyrs play
 To the rosy urchin's roundelay.
 Loyal minstrels nightly dream
 They sweep the chords and glowing theme,
 That chrystal rills transcendant shine :
 Soft and more soft their sounds combine,
 Affection trilling to a note divine.

Mans

Sylvan Claremont's blithe retreat
~~Euphys~~ wafts surpassing sweet :
 Joyous swains wake village-bells,
 And godlike love in Tempe dwells.
 Larks more sprightly plume the wing,
 And at heav'n's gate earlier sing :
 Ringdoves coo in mellower note,
 Their mate-responses kinder float :
 Hybla's bees till later hour
 Sip of love the sweetest flower :
 London's proud bells now prouder sound,
 And ladies costly dight emblaze the festive round.

Exhausted war no more proclaims
 Hist'ry's thirst of nobler names,

The dread-mouth'd cannon only roars
 Domestic bias to foreign shores ;
 Inviting fives to cheerful tone,
 * Drums drown no more the hero's groan ;
 Old Albion's ensign fans the air,
 No more a guardian's desp'rate care,
 Coiling his breast to steep what wounds are there.*

Hie thee, Cupid, bring my lyre :
 See thou addst the silv'ry wire :
 Now in nectar bathe thy wing,
 Till sweet Philomela sing.

On our Paphian isle
 New graces smile ;
 To azure skies
 Our peans rise ;
 Waltz, quadrille,
 Sport their fill ;
 Gayest measure,
 Softest pleasure,
 Joys else unknown,
 Are lovers' own ;
 Dimpled charms
 Care disarms ;
 Hearts at rest,
 Lovers blest !

Oh ! Britannia, happy state,
 Where bliss unites the beauteous and the great !

* Glancing at the ensign (not the only case), who, when conscious of a glorious termination to his career, enshrouded his own body with the tattered colours of his country, the partner of his immortal honours, and the costume of an illustrious corpse.

T

Under the many pecuniary disadvantages, with which I persevered in the scholastic line, my success was as great, perhaps, as, under the circumstances alluded to, might be expected, until the year 1816, which brought with it a train of successive misfortunes, that no wisdom could foresee, no prudence parry, nor any integrity of itself surmount. The depression of agricultural interests stood foremost in the van of calamity; and during the very low ebb of the markets, whilst indifferent persons one hour congratulated me on my profits by my boarders, the next presented the children's friends with faces much longer than my bills, and "with a "withering look" announced an unavoidable necessity for withdrawing their children from a boarding-school.

The difference of spirits, if not of fortune, in the agricultural population, with which I was almost wholly surrounded, made me readily foresee a very great doubt, whether in the event of the markets recovering, a less confined system of economy would return. I therefore conceived it indispensably requisite to give up the premises I occupied, either for others less expensive (relying wholly on a respectable day-school), or else to shift my speculation to a spot

more remote and less dependent on the same rank. This would have been accompanied with some inconvenience and much regret; and yet these were magnified to a height, much easier to conceive than describe, by a continued and unaccountable delay in remittances from abroad; for the entire support and care of four children. Here then fell a blow, which, unlike some that merely hurt, finally paralyzed every effort of fortitude at once to relinquish an untenable, and to choose a fresh position; for after a full half year's anxiety, disappointed and augmented with each succeeding post, and unable even to obtain a satisfactory reason to this hour, my misfortunes had acquired an accession of embarrassment, which disarmed me of all means of defence: at the same time it exposed me to the basest misrepresentation, as well as the most cruel insults, of which ignorant and sordid wretches are capable. Not that my affliction passed unpitied—thank heaven! I had the consolation to know, that there were people, who, besides professing the christian religion, gave me the tenderest proofs of their believing it—people, on whose compassion I might have drawn largely, and probably to the detriment of the families of some. My situation was not as the bankrupt's, who may obtain his certificate and again prosper on the same ground: I was to resign

my occupation, and go elsewhere in search of another. Where no one could tell; but certainly with all the disadvantage of a family of ten, independent of any servant.

Another event in this year, and perhaps the most disparaging to my fortunes, was one which deprived me of interests promised on a certain subject, to be brought forward at the proper time, from the revered hands of a father. His death could only afford one satisfaction: that crippled with the infirmities of age, and adding a long and painful confinement to a sick and dying chamber, death was the only remedy which the most affectionate valuers of his existence could contemplate. My last interview was only a few weeks previous to his dissolution, and furnished a scene, than which few can be more distressing or awful. It was summer, and he was placed in a chair, between the door I entered and the open window, to catch a few last breezes, and court the faint respite of that small and palpitating breath, which was too evidently doomed soon to cease: already had it passed the fortress of the heart, it now seemed quivering on his lip, reluctantly preparing to lock up the last apartment of its antient mansion. Nature seemed to grudge the payment of her debt, and would fain keep back the sterling

metal of so prized a coin. His eyes were in some degree distorted, and wanted the penetration, which when a boy commanded my obedience, or smiled me into joy. His hands were paralyzed, and lay useless by his side, either incapable of shaking mine; and the reception he gave me was a flood of tears, which seemed to say, to what a helpless state do you see me reduced. I had resolved to arm myself with all the fortitude at my controul, mostly for his sake, as such a weak condition could not be strengthened by reciprocity of melancholy; but after his speaking (or I should rather say whispering) some time with a gasping difficulty, and my not readily comprehending his remarks, he observed, that it was a pleasure for him to know that his children did so well. I said I was sorry that there should be any exception, alluding to my younger brother Richard, and meaning to tell him that I would do all for him that was in my power, as I knew he did not forget him, notwithstanding his observation. I wished to afford him the last small comfort in my disposal, and not to hint a syllable of the uneasy posture of my own affairs; but, telling him that I should be happy if I could but see my children brought up decently, their tender image, and the consciousness of my own difficulties, overleaped the restraint I had imposed on my feelings, and

with sudden impetus arrested a convulsive gush of anguish, which, though I rose to conceal, was found in vain. I quitted the apartment, and walked in the garden. I visited him again in the afternoon, and found him more tranquil. He despatched on his infirmities with a composure and a truth, that would have carried conviction to small experience of mundane affairs. He said, that he was confident there was a good God. He told me the Earl of Buckinghamshire, his neighbour, had been to visit him, and talked of endeavouring to procure him a good living (I suppose he must mean a larger one than any he possessed); but that he replied, 'What good, my lord, will a living do a dying man?' His mind was now replete with a firmness, which sometimes nearly approached to cheerfulness. He related (amongst others) an anecdote of the celebrated Dr. Churchill (his old acquaintance) the physician, attending a patient, and finding his friends had introduced (as he conceived) the offices of a priest too frequently and prematurely, he was offended at the measure, and asked them if they wished to kill his patient—meaning that the sick might suffer gloom from over-exertion of religious efforts, however laudably meant at that season of his complaint, when nature asked more cheerful ideas to effect his recovery. Time at length obliging me to quit my father, I felt

sensible that it was for the last time. I knew that the will of God was better than our own, and strove to conform to it as becomingly as it were possible. His language was affectionate, and these were his parting words—‘Remember me to your wife.’

The following is my last tribute :

Oh ! rest thee, my sire, ne'er so cold though thy bed,
Where nature so wearied hath pillow'd thy head.
Oh ! dream not thy son ever traitor can prove,
To the loyalty pledged in infancy's love.

Oh ! monarchs I own'd in my juvenile day,
Were my mother and you ; and proud of your sway,
Oh ! ere the rude blasts of affliction began,
That weaker than childhood discovered the man.

Oh ! I boast not virtue, for man's born to sin :
I'll only proclaim the endearments of kin.
Oh ! Charles shall not err from the maxims you taught.
For experience now ripens what boyhood had caught.

Oh ! rest thee, my sire, in security's arms,
Of care the rude blasts now no more sound alarms :
'Twas the herald of peace announced thy decay,
And to bliss the last trump will summon thy way.

cannot even yet desert the notice of my father's death without observing, that if a mild and conciliating exercise of magisterial power be an argument in defence of clerical admission to it, his memory will long furnish one endearing example: no relic of monkish austerity and arbitrary will seemed to have clung to the Reformation; but oppression, selfishness, and pride were awhile forgotten in the unaffected placidity of his christian love and charity.

To recapitulate the story of my united griefs at this season, would be

“ To bid Æneas tell the tale twice o’er,
 “ How Troy was burnt, and he made miserable.”

F I N I S .

CASE OF MISFORTUNE.

*Post Office, Holt, Norfolk,
July 22, 1817.*

Mr. BENNETT, (recently Master of an Academy at North Walsham) with the to be seen, that no integrity or industry on his part, has been able to shield him from a dilemma, the usual punishment of imprudence, and involving his infant charges, with every earthly endearment, in its cruel sacrifice. Though the tone of feelings may be somewhat deadened by a twelvemonth's protracted care, there is a delicacy left, that shrinks at particularizing, unasked, his distress : and the principal consolation, to which he looks, is a reliance on the justice, which may be done to his intentions.

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